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ABSTRACT

This document contains chapter 7 of the final report of the Project on Social Architecture in Education. Chapter 7 is about a new open-space elementary school. The hopes were to create a humanely oriented, flexible program, in which teaching teams would utilize the open space in creative ways, emphasizing individualization. The early planning left most details open, and the final planning was carried out collaboratively by the new principal and the staff. The planning largely ignored growing community criticism: parents felt their expectations for walls dividing the open space and for more-traditional learning options had been violated. The case shows how environmental pressures on a school, in conjuction with internal difficulties and weaknesses, can induce radical organizational change over time--in this case from a "collegial" organization to a coercive, then a bureaucratic one, gradually moving back in a collegial direction. (Author/MLF)

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PROJECT ON
SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE IN EDUCATION

Final Report

Part III: Case Studies

Chapter 7

CHANGE AND CONFLICT

Educational Innovation in Community Context

Barry A. Gold

with

Matthew B. Miles

EA 011 519

Center for Policy Research
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027

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Part III: Case Studies

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From Final Report to National Institute of Education, Grant NIE-G-74-0051. Designing and Starting Innovative Schools: a Field Study of Social Architecture in Education. Matthew B. Miles, Principal Investigator.

December, 1978

Introductory Note

This volume is a portion of the Final Report, Grant NIE-G-74-0051, "Designing and Starting Innovative Schools: a Field Study of Social Architecture in Education," Matthew B. Miles, Principal Investigator.

The Final Report contains the following parts:

Part I: Introduction

1. Executive Summary
2. New Schools as a Strategy for Educational Improvement
3. Planning and Implementing New Schools: a General Framework

Part II: Research Methods

4. Project Overview
5. Research Methods
    Appendices

Part III: Case Studies

6. Westgate Schools: a case study of two open-space elementary schools
7. Change and Conflict: educational innovation in community context
8. Innovation in Lakeport
    College High School: a planning case study
    The Founding of Julius Appelbaum High School
9. Arts Co-op an experimental high school program

Part IV: Conclusions

10. Reflections on the Case Studies
11. Implications and Advice

Part V: Mapping New Schools: a series of new-school planning guides

1. Setting the stage for planning
2. Designing your school
3. Mapping your school's environment
4. Making your school work

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The Project on Social Architecture in Education has engaged the active energies of many people over the past four years. The core research staff responsible for this Final Report were Matthew B. Miles, Ellen W. Sullivan, Barry A. Gold, Beverly Loy Taylor, Sam D. Sieber and David E. Wilder. Their specific writing contributions and their ongoing roles are identified in the Report. The value of four years of satisfying work together goes far beyond any acknowledgement that can be given here.

Dale G. Lake collaborated closely in the creation of the Project and was a strong co-investigator during the first year, with staff members Bunty Ketcham, Denise Burch, and Julie Quain.

We are very grateful for the additional field work efforts of Wynne Galanter, Dan Lauffer, Alaka Wali, Robin Geller, and Wamboi Kironde.

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Jolene Vrchota, Thomas Cook, and Joan Charles provided coding and clerical assistance; administrative and secretarial support came from Ann Wechsler, Anita McCabe, and Gay Gaskins. The Final Report was meticulously, even cheerfully, typed by Judy Woolcock, Evelyn Ledyard and Audrey McGhie.

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Several dozen colleagues assisted the project with manuscript review, came to our work conferences, and advised on project planning and strategy. They are named at appropriate places in the Report. Here we mention with gratitude those who served in our pool of consultants to school sites: Billie Alban, Marc Bassin, Peter Block, Lloyd Bishop, Bob Chasnoff, Felicia Clark, Al Fitz, Ann Lieberman, Peter Muniz, Saul Pilnick,Herb Shepard, and Mary Hunter Wolf.

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Perhaps our most helpful collaborators must go unidentified. The several hundred people from our six schools whose work we studied were far from being mere objects of study. Many gave active energy to helping us think through the issues of planning and implementation in new schools. They gave us full and thorough access, and many gave extra time. The study would have been impossible without their help. We know from some, and hope for all, that their learning has been as valuable as ours.

Overview of the Case Studies

Each of the case studies in Part III of the Final Report was based on two to three years' documentation of the planning and implementation of a complete new school for which innovative expectations were held. Our aims were to follow what happened along the way as carefully as possible; to describe, and if possible explain the processes that occurred; and to show how these processes were related to the achievement, revision or abandonment of the original innovative hopes. We believe we have been successful. We hope readers will test that belief carefully as they proceed.

The five case studies include:

Miles, M.B., Westgate Schools: a case study of two open-space elementary schools.

These schools emphasized open education in new open-space settings, in a small, suburban district.

Gold, B.A., with M.B.Miles, Change and conflict: educational innovation in community context.

A new, open-space elementary school came into severe conflict with its suburban community, Lincoln Acres.

Miles, M.B., E.W. Sullivan, and B.A. Gold, College High School: a planning case study.

This experimental high school, involving collaboration between the Lakeport urban school district and a college, was not implemented.

Sieber, S.D., and M.B. Miles, The founding of Julius Appelbaum High School.

A new high school for business careers was set in the same urban school district, reaching out to the local business community.

Sullivan, E.W., Arts Co-op: a case study of an experimental high school program.

This jointly-sponsored school brought practicing artists together with students from an urban and several suburban school districts.

We should express here our warm appreciation to the people whose work we studied during the years of our project. They must remain anonymous through the pseudonyms we have given them, but they are far from anonymous to us. They were not only almost unfailingly cordial and helpful to our efforts, but also supplied useful corrections and interpretations to draft versions of the cases. They taught us a great deal during the course of the project, and we are happy to say that many told us they had learned from the experience themselves.

In drafting the cases from a data base which usually involved several thousand pages of field notes, documents, and questionnaire data, we soon found that they could not be forced into a standard length. Each case is as long as its authors considered necessary for a thorough understanding of what occurred.

The cases were all guided by the general framework of ideas outlined in Part I, although each naturally has some idiosyncratic features.

The case studies have been organized according to a common format to permit easy comparison. Each one provides a general overview of the school as it now exists, then backtracks to its early history. We then see the flow of planning and implementation over time. A summary assessment of each school's success, and our explanations, are followed by commentary from participants in each school, who offer their views on what happened and why.

A Table of Contents at the front of each case is designed to provide an overview of the case structure, and enable rapid access to its parts.

It should be noted that the flow of each case separates sections which describe the events and processes ("Chronology") from those which provide interpretations ("Analysis and Commentary"). Thus the reader can more easily see whether alternative interpretations are possible.

We have already found these cases very productive for teaching and training purposes. It works well to give learners the cases in sequenced segments. They first see a "Chronology" section, then develop their own interpretations, and predictions of what will happen next. Then they receive the "Analysis and Commentary" section before proceeding to the next "Chronology" section, and so on.

The reader interested in general conclusions drawn from all five case studies should refer to Part IV of the Final Report.

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> I'll ultimately run my own kind of school anyhow. Whatever is decided in the political arena doesn't matter. They will come out with a school that I can run; I can run an exemplary school in an outhouse if necessary. I shouldn't get too hung up about politics. I will do things the most efficient way that people want things done -- open education is an efficiency device. The dispute was about if I can deliver what is expected by the means I choose.
>
> Ellis Brown, Lincoln Acres School Principal -- after three months of planning the new school.

> As I was telling you this thing, it occurred to me that it would be an interesting play or novel. It's almost like a little tragedy with sub-plots weaving back and forth. So many little elements. At the end of the whole thing you say: How did this really happen? How did such a fine thing go bad? It's really kind of a fascinating story.
>
> Sy Golden, Lincoln Acres PTA President -- five months after the school opened.

I. INTRODUCTION

Creating new, innovative educational organizations is often considered a good way to improve schools. But this strategy has failed frequently, and is not well understood at all. This study documents the planning and first two years of operation of a new, innovative elementary school.1) Since we believed that more of value could be learned from examining a successful innovation -- most studies report on failures -- we selected a school that was not only innovative -- it included team teaching, open space classrooms, and individualization of instruction -- but appeared to be supplied with ample talent, commitment and resources. Guiding the research were the following questions: What are the social processes involved in planning and creating a new, innovative school? Why do so many schools launched with innovative hopes regress to typicality, or fail outright? How can new, innovative schools be planned and developed in a way that realizes their planners' dreams?

Originally, a small group of educators, the "planners" of the school, was the anticipated focus of inquiry; we expected to record and analyze how they performed a variety of planning tasks and linked them to implementation and operation of a school. Shortly after research began, however, it became evident that several groups besides the planners were intricately involved in the development of the new school. Among them were the Board of Education, the central administrative office of the school district and, most prominently, the community that the school was to serve. Incorporation of these groups into the research design did not alter the usefulness of the original questions; indeed, it eventually became clear that any attempt to understand the educational change process without examining these groups' roles would produce limited and probably misleading results.

---

1) This study was carried out as part of a larger project, Designing and Starting Innovative Schools: A Field Study of Social Architecture in Education, Grant NIE-G-74-0051, of which the principal investigator was Matthew B. Miles. Neither the National Institute of Education, nor Teachers Corps, which also provided support during the 1974-77 period of the project, are responsible for the views expressed here.

An earlier version of this study was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the Executive Committee of The Graduate School of Fine Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, 1977.

Persons described in the case have supplied corrections and commentary (usually included as footnotes); changes in the case have also been made on request to further de-identify and protect individuals.

Another benefit of enlarging the scope of the research was that a broader social policy issue emerged. The central social process around which this theme crystalized was a prolonged, at times bitter, conflict between the professional educators and the parents of children attending the school. At its core, the conflict was over whether the educators or the parents had the right to determine the type of education the school would offer. Considered from a somewhat different perspective, this type of conflict concerns the relationship between formal organizations, such as schools and other bureaucracies with power based on expertise, and primary groups such as neighborhoods, voluntary associations and families, groups relatively low on expertise. Indeed, in Western industrial society the tension between expert judgement and citizen participation in decision-making -- the exercise of democratic values -- has been increasing to the extent that it may soon constitute a major axis of social conflict (Bell, 1973). The conflict in the setting we studied provided a research site for looking more closely into this sociological problem, especially the control or influence mechanisms between school and community.

Finally, through the medium of conflict, the school became a stage for the expression, elaboration and, to some extent, change in the sentiments and values of middle-class suburban parents: the community's aspirations for its children, attitudes toward education, innovation, and the role of experts were forcefully put forward. For the educators, the new school unexpectedly became a vehicle for the formulation, refinement and testing of their professional ethos in the arena of public opinion. Thus, along with an analysis of an educational change, we provide a view into part of the cultural system of a community, and a chronicle of the attempt of members of an occupation to increase their status. These themes, along with those mentioned above, are developed throughout the text.

A. Advances over Previous Studies

This study differs from previous case studies of innovative schools in two important respects.2) Most significantly, the scope of the study extends beyond the boundaries of the organization to the external

---

2) The literature on educational and organizational innovation is extensive and cannot be reviewed here. Similarly, there are dozens of case studies -- perhaps hundreds if a very elastic definition of "case study" is used -- of educational innovations. Only two well-known case studies, however, are roughly comparable to the present one since they investigate total organizational innovations using the case study method and an elementary school as the research site. These studies are: Gross et al (1971) Implementing Organizational Innovations and Smith and Keith's (1971) Anatomy of Educational Innovation. The differences described above are largely improvements in research design over these two studies.

environment. This was accomplished through vigorous use of the exploratory properties of field work and the use of field work findings and hunches in the construction of faculty and community questionnaires (see Sieber, 1973). One result of this research strategy was the generation of a larger set of explanatory variables for the central dependent variables, including the dynamics of the organization and the degree of implementation of the innovation, than have been proposed by previous researchers. As mentioned above, this exploratory approach also led to the emergence of social policy issues that are central to successful organizational change efforts.

Like most case studies, this one is longitudinal. It improves on past research, however, in that the time dimension is extended both further backward, into the history of the innovative effort before the school opened, as well as forward, beyond immediate implementation into the second year of operation of the school. The importance of studying the planning history -- especially the behavior of the planners, not reports of planning -- is that it influences estimations of the degree of implementation of the change, since contingencies and discontingencies between the two activities can be more closely and accurately documented.

It is often the case that researchers end their case studies soon after the innovation has apparently failed. This practice has resulted in the inferred finding that once the innovation initially fails the change effort has ended. There is reason to believe that this finding is an artifact of the research design, not an accurate reporting of social reality; after initial failure in our study, there was a period of salvaging and then reimplementation of parts of the original innovation. Overall, it is argued here that a longer time perspective is needed than is usually employed to properly understand an attempt to change an organization.

B. Aspects of the Study

Three main interrelated aspects form the content of this study. First, it presents a detailed natural history of the planning and first two years of operation of the Lincoln Acres elementary school. The major events that occurred are presented chronologically. These events are often reconstructed in the words of the participants; we also provide their commentary on and analysis of what happened. An effort has been made to present the narrative more or less as "raw data"; the author's commentary and analysis appears recurrently in designated separate sections of the text.

Generally, we present a sociological analysis and explanation of the processes described in the natural history. The objective was to make conceptual sense -- abstract and generalizable statements -- from the welter of empirical detail in the description. Our primary attention is on the dynamics of the conflict that developed between the school and

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community, particularly the ways in which it affected implementation of the innovation by changing the social relations within the school and between the school and community. We also examine the unintended consequences of the planners' and community's actions, as well as the latent functions of the innovative effort. Because of the exploratory nature of the study we present hypotheses for further research whenever possible.

Finally, the study has implications for the design of innovative educational settings, and also raises social policy issues concerning educational change. Guidelines and insights for educators undertaking organizational changes are found throughout the text. The major social policy question centers on the role of planners and educational experts in a democratic society.

Audiences

In view of the aspects listed above and the research design advances, this study should prove useful or interesting to several groups. For administrators, teachers and consultants who are themselves planning and creating new schools, this case study provides examples of pitfalls and successes. It will also enable citizens with an interest in education to obtain a more complete image of the effects of community involvement on a new school, and its implications. For both of these groups, this study provides an in-depth view of the political realities of educational change efforts.

Graduate students in education and the social sciences, as well as educational researchers, should be able to learn more about the dynamics of a new school's development, school-community conflict, and the school as an organization. Additionally, the study demonstrates ways in which intensive field work and quantitative data can enrich each other.

C. Overview of the Research Methods

1. The research relationship

Research in the Lincoln Acres school and community began in December, 1974, and ended in June, 1977.

On January 3, 1975, three days after the principal arrived to begin work on planning the school, a contract was signed by him, the superintendent of the schools and the research project staff. The important elements of the contract were that the researcher be permitted to observe and collect data at all meetings relevant to the planning of the school, that questionnaire data could be collected, that the researcher would maintain the confidentiality of all informants, and that all individuals as well as the school system and community would remain anonymous.

Another feature of the agreement was an offer of periodic summary feedback reports, to be made upon the request of the school.[3] Finally, the agreement stated that no ongoing advice, help or reaction would be supplied by the researcher.[4]

The relationships that developed between the researcher[5] and the faculty and community members were direct, trustful and as far as can be determined, open. As evidence of this, in several instances, the researcher was asked by informants not to take notes because they considered what they were saying to be too revealing. In other cases, information that would eventually affect the school deeply was told only to the researcher, even with the speaker's knowledge that it was being recorded. There was more than one instance in which the researcher was treated as a confidante by conflicting parties; he often had more information about the situation than any single person involved. Of course, there were also instances when people withheld data, as there always are in any social system being studied.

To foster trust and thus sources of data among the faculty the researcher never discussed information obtained from one person with another. Additionally, he made a steady -- and, it seems, successful -- effort to avoid interfering with the operation of the school in any way.

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3) One such report was prepared for the faculty near the end of their intensive summer planning workshop. Another report, on community attitudes toward the school, was made available to interested parents during the spring of the first year of operation.

4) The researcher's role was thus defined as decidedly non-interventive. One objective of the larger project was to understand the role of consultants as facilitators of new-school planning and development. Toward this end, the project made modest funds (usually under $1,000) available to its sites on a matching basis for hiring mutually-agreed on consultants. The project staff wished to study their work -- and also thought their presence might increase the "success" of implementation, and thus usefulness of the project's findings to others.

The project staff also expected that the consulting funds might serve as an extra inducement for schools to permit the research. At Lincoln Acres, this was not initially the case; the principal was skeptical about the use of consultants. He did use some funds for a residential workshop for faculty, but did not otherwise take advantage of the offer.

5) "Researcher" as used throughout this study refers to the author, who was the primary field worker in the site. The project director occasionally visited the site. The author often discussed his observations with the project staff as the project proceeded.

2. Data collection techniques[6]

Field methods, the primary source of data for this study, involve the researcher's presence and interaction with the people he is studying. That interaction can range from total involvement, being an actual participant, to total non-involvement, being a passive, unobtrusive observer. (Gold, 1958) For the most part, this study was conducted toward the passive, or near-complete observer end of the continuum. Classrooms, faculty meetings, PTA meetings and Board of Education meetings were attended without the researcher's contributing directly to the business transacted in them.

Field methods also involve interviewing people. In this study, two kinds of interviews were used. First, retrospective interviews were used in which the respondent was asked to describe historical events, usually guided by a set of pre-designated questions. Second, the researcher often used informal, unstructured interviews, which occurred after meetings, during teaching hours, in the principal's office and at social events.

Notes from field work were recorded -- whenever possible, verbatim -- on pads and later typed by the researcher. In particularly luxurious, but unfortunately rare instances, a tape recorder was used and verbatim transcriptions were made.

The researcher tried to be present at all faculty meetings, all PTA meetings and all Board of Education meetings that had the new school as their topic. He also attended several Lincoln Acres Homeowners Association meetings where the school was discussed. The school was also frequently observed at a sample of times when it was in operation. In addition the school and community were cultivated; they provided information on events that the researcher was not permitted to attend either because of their confidential nature or the inability of the researcher to be ubiquitous.[7] Over the course of field work the researcher contacted the site 190 times in person and another 25 times by telephone. Site visits ranged from a few hours duration to several full-day contacts in a particular week.

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6) The methodological aspects of the researcher's role are discussed more fully in Appendix A.

7) All faculty members served as informants. Some, of course, were more articulate, willing to talk about and speculate on events than others. In Chart I on pages 10-11 a + next to a community member's name indicates that fairly regular contact was maintained with this person throughout the study. Although numerous others were continuously observed and spoken with at meetings this smaller group served as primary informants.

Any documents produced by the school or other organizations that provided information about the school were collected, read and used to inform the field research. Documents collected and used fall into five categories: (1) internal organization communication; (2) organizational communication with external groups, for instance, parents, the Board of Education, the local newspaper; (3) communications from parents and parent organizations to the school or related organizations; (4) local and state newspapers; and finally, (5) miscellaneous, for example, a former mayor's autobiography, articles by residents appearing in professional journals and articles in national mass media.

In addition to these major sources of qualitative data, a substantial amount of quantitative data was collected. In February, shortly after the faculty was formed, a short open-ended questionnaire on their expectations for the new school was administered to the teachers. In June, during an intensive faculty workshop, a "goals" questionnaire was administered to the faculty.

In December and June of the first year of operation, and in May of the second year, lengthy questionnaires were administered to all faculty members. At approximately the same times a mail survey was sent to all parents of children enrolled in the school. Findings from the surveys are presented in the text.

Whenever it has been possible, "triangulation" has been used: we referred to more than one source of data to reconstruct the natural history of the school. For instance, in many cases newspaper accounts of events have been compared with participants' accounts as well as with the researcher's experiences of them. Additionally, quotations from the actors and excerpts from documents will be presented when appropriate. This should permit the reader to grasp the reality of the situation as the actors defined it and acted upon it, with minimal re-interpretation by the author. All writing is interpretation; presentation of quotations should at least allow the reader to evaluate the tacit interpretations being made.

It should also be noted that this study is based primarily on observation of behavior, supplemented with people's reports and interpretations of their own and other's behavior and their attitudes; not, as is often the case in educational research, only on subjective responses constrained by standardized instruments.

One final point: many fairly routine events are reported here -- we hope in a style that is not mundane -- for three reasons. First, they occurred in the creation of this school, as they do in the everyday life of most human beings and collectivities such as organizations; to exclude them would be to bias our view of life in the school in terms of the exciting, unpredictable and novel (of which there is much, as the reader shall see). Secondly, not to include the mundane, routine, repetitious elements of school life and planning would create an incorrect impression for those who undertake to plan new, innovative schools -- they might conclude that little hard work is involved, and that everything will be exciting. Third, one latent objective of educational innovation, it seems, is to relieve the participants of the dullness of the "daily grind" of school life. So the nature of everyday life in schools -- even innovative ones -- must be described and analyzed, if it is to be successfully changed.

D. Organization of the Case

The table of contents outlines the chronology of the case. After an overview of concepts used in the study, (Chapter II), our account begins with a discussion of the context in Chapter III and then proceeds through early planning in Chapter IV, intensive planning through the summer of 1975 in Chapters V and VI and the opening of school in the Fall in Chapters VII and VIII. The events of the latter part of the first year are described and analyzed in Chapter X. The chronology ends with Chapter XI, which presents the events of the second year of operation. Throughout the text analysis sections are clearly separated from description of the events that formed planning, implementation and operation. A concluding chapter draws general implications.

To aid the reader, Chart 1.1 on pages 10-11 provides a list of the major actors in the school and community.

CHART 1.1

MAJOR ACTORS IN LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY
(All names used are pseudonyms)

Staff of the school:

Ellis Brown -- Principal
Sam Pennington -- Resource Teacher
Monica Selwin -- School Secretary
Lee Whitmore -- Physical Education
Lindy Braun -- Art

Alice Houghton
Sarah Fox
Louise Hargrove Kindergarten Team

Katie Neustadt
Jane Baylor
Sally Candler Primary Team (NBC)

Wanda Molloy
Priscilla Talbot
Dori Kraus Primary Team (MTK)

Rebecca Barone
Glenda Jacobs
Norbert White Intermediate Team (BJW)

Central office staff:

Dr. Robert Biddle -- Superintendent of Schools
Anthony Smith -- Assistant to the Superintendent
Astrid Little -- Assistant to the Superintendent
Louis Fromme -- Head of Special Educational Services
Imogene Miller -- Coordinator of Student Work Experience Program (SWEP)
Bob Haines -- Head of Maintenance

Community members:

Charles Minetta -- Community Leader
Sy Golden -- Board of Education Attorney, PTA President+
Barbara Berger -- Co-chairperson Lincoln Acres Homeowners Association+
Barbara Collins -- Community Leader (LAHA) Education Committee+

Community members (continued)

Michael Karalis -- Founder of LAHA
Mary Johns -- Local newspaper reporter
Charles Frisch -- Education Expert, Board of Education Member+
Alex Georgiades -- Parent
Paul Elfenbein -- President of LAHA
Rob Goldman -- Parent, Board of Education Member
Irena Farrell -- Board of Education President
Sylvia Peabody -- Board of Education Member
Estelle Hunter -- Board of Education Member
Robert Klahr -- Board of Education Member
Gerrie Holden -- Board of Education Member
Marie Bonomi -- Parent
Sam Schwartz -- Former Co-chairperson LAHA Education Committee+
Virginia Vitelle -- Parent

+Primary informant, with regular contact maintained.

II. CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

We will not repeat here a description of the general framework of concepts used in the larger study of which this case is a part; that framework is presented in detail in Part I of this report. Those concepts, as the reader will see, are used repeatedly to guide the analysis and commentary sections of the case.

As we have noted, the community context became crucial in this particular case study. So we add here some notes on one other conceptual issue: the degree to which one considers an organization to be a "closed system", self-sufficient, or an "open system", engaged in regular transaction with its environment.

A. Two Views of Organizations

Organizations as closed systems. The closed system approach includes writers of the scientific management viewpoint (Taylor, 1922), the public administration perspective (Gulick and Urwick, 1934), and the bureaucratic tradition (Weber, 1947). At a general level, these authors share the perspective that rationality is the criterion of efficient organizations -- and that it can be achieved through specialization of tasks, standardization of role performance, unity of command and centralization of decision-making, uniformity of practices and the non-duplication of functions. These are all subject to variables within the boundaries of the organization and under the control of those positioned in the top of the administrative hierarchy, the policy-makers.

An idea of fundamental importance for our purposes is that closed-system theorists view all organizations as consisting of the same elements; all organizations are, or from a normative perspective, should be, structured in the same way. The implication of this for the planning of a new organization is that there is only one way to do it.

Organizations as open systems. In contrast to the closed system perspective, the basic assumption of the open system,8) contingency or multi-model approach to organizational analysis, is that "organizational variables are in a complex interrelationship with one another and with

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8) The open systems theory is most fully developed in Katz and Kahn (1967) and Buckley (1967). James Thompson (1967) claims to have combined the open and closed systems perspectives. For a critical review of Thompson's work and that of other theorists using similar frameworks, see Argyris (1972). Several other important theories adopt a similar approach in that they recognize multiple types of organizational structure and thus depart from the Weberian tradition. Chief among these are Etzioni (1961); Crozier (1963); and Litwak (1961).

conditions in the environment" (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967: 157). Some writers (Katz and Kahn, 1966; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) claim that the sole source of contingencies that the organization has to confront are environmental, such as fluctuations in the availability of raw materials or competition. For other writers (Thompson, 1967; Litwak and Meyer, 1974) the technology of the organization is also a source of uncertainty. An important aspect of this approach is that a number of empirical studies (for example, Woodward, 1965; Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) have found that the type of task or technology of the organization determines, in large part, the organizational structure. All organizational structures, however, are not effective for all types of tasks (Galbraith, 1973).

There are two important implications of this perspective for the planning of an organization. First, there are uncertainties arising from both the organizational technology and environment that have to be managed. Second, there is no single effective way to design an organization.

Effects on past studies. To a large extent, past research on schools as organizations and on innovations in education has followed a Weberian or closed system model, and viewed schools as primarily bureaucratic structures (cf. Bidwell, 1965; Clark, 1964). Schools are often described and then analyzed as either slightly departing from or disproving the ideal-typical bureaucratic model, not as organizations with potentially entirely different characteristics (Miles, 1965).9) Another product of this approach is that empirical studies of innovation in schools focus only on variables within the organization; organizational boundaries are not viewed as problematic, nor is the participation or roles of groups in the organizational environment.

The limitation of the closed-system perspective is not particularly severe in studies of small-scale innovations such as the use of teaching machines, revisions in student scheduling or the use of a new textbook. None of these requires significant behavioral change for teachers,

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9) Lortie (1977: 3) makes a similar point:

> Students of school organization such as Bidwell, Hanson and Lortie have shown some of the ways in which schools and school systems depart from the popular conception of bureaucracies as uniformly tightly-controlled and tightly-knit hierarchies; Weick has added the term "loose coupling" to help us understand more about organizations where all of the conditions of bureaucracy do not obtain (Bidwell, 1965; Hanson, 1973; Lortie, 1975; Weick, 1976). Other theorists such as Katz and Kahn and Thompson have alerted us to the openness of social systems and the importance of transactions across organizational boundaries (Katz and Kahn, 1966; Thompson, 1967). These and other conceptions are gradually changing our perception of urban school districts.

students, administrators or parents; they are not sharp departures from the daily routine of school. For the study of large-scale innovations that affect the total organization, the closed system perspective is a serious limitation.10) For instance, in a review of studies of large-scale organizational innovations in education Fullan (1972) observed that:

> It is significant that the analysis by Gross, et al. (1971), Smith and Keith (1971) and Sarason show virtually no evidence that the goals and possible new role implications of parents or students were part of the (innovative) process.

Studies which focus solely on internal organization variables not only ignore the goals and roles of the organization's clients -- parents and students,11) but fail to consider clients' influence on the innovations. In addition, another set of influences on the success or failure of the

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10) For examples of the use of closed-system approaches to innovation in education see Gross, et al. (1971); Smith and Keith (1971); Myers (1973); Center for New Schools (1975); Estabrook and Fullan (1977); and Bentzen (1974). In the final chapter of this study substantive issues raised by Gross, et al. (1971) and Smith and Keith (1971) are discussed. These two studies are important because they are roughly comparable with the present one. Gross and his colleagues studied a shift in teacher role from that of "teller" to "catalyst" or mediator between instructional materials and the students. This was an innovation of wide scope since new roles for all participants were involved even though Gross was concerned primarily with the behavior of teachers. The Smith and Keith study is of the implementation of a new, innovative open space elementary school. They, like Gross, did not focus on the planning period or on the roles of participants other than the teachers. It should be noted that both Gross, et al. and Smith and Keith studied schools in which the innovations failed convincingly. These two studies are among the few that are systematic in their approach. But our contention is that without inclusion of data from the school's environment we cannot fully understand the failure (or success) of a comprehensive effort like that involved in creating a new school.

11) This situation is not confined to the study of schools. Blau and Scott (1962: 74) note that "One serious shortcoming of most organizational studies, including our own, is that there is no investigation of the publics related to the organization." In the analysis of schools, Saxe (1976) and Bridge (1976) have considered the role of clients but only from the viewpoint of the ways school administrators can control their participation.

innovation -- the contexts of the local community and the properties of the national system of education (Wayland, 1964; Miles, 1977) -- are not explicitly accounted for. In other words, adhering to a closed system perspective excludes a wide array of variables that could influence the type of innovation, the rate of change, the organizational structure and thus the success or failure of the innovation.

B. Implications

This study is decisively built around open-systems thinking. That is, we view the process of organizational planning and creation as being affected by conditions in the local environment and the features of education in American society. Reference to the general framework outlined in Part I will underscore this assertion. What are the implications?

First, and most obviously, the study will pay a good deal of attention to persons, roles and groups in the school's environment as they influenced the school's development -- and to school participants' actions which were environmentally relevant.

Second, this perspective suggests that there is no single correct form of organization for achieving the highest degree of effectiveness; there are multiple possible organizational structures according to the type of task performed. We must resist the temptation to be normative about what organizational forms emerged over time in this case.

Third, since planning a total innovative organization is a complex, non-uniform set of tasks, as outlined in Part I, we can expect a good deal of uncertainty within the core group which is planning and implementing the new school. They confront and manage (or avoid and mismanage) an indeterminate -- but always large -- number of technological and environmental contingencies.

And in addition to environmental contingencies there is often inherently a high degree of uncertainty within the planning/implementation group. Stinchcombe (1965), using the term "liability of newness," identifies several important sources of uncertainty in new organizations which also pertain to groups planning new organizations. These are that new organizations: (1) require the learning of new roles; (2) there are high costs in time, worry and conflict and temporary inefficiency while new roles and communication procedures develop, and; (3) "new organizations must rely heavily on social relations among strangers," a feature which creates precarious relations of trust. We shall often be examining both internal and external sources of uncertainty, and the ways in which they are managed or reduced over the course of the case.

III. THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL: PRESENT AND PAST

We have already stressed that educational innovation cannot be adequately understood apart from the environment in which it takes place. We cannot ignore, either, the relevant events which have preceded it (Sarason, 1972). This chapter focuses on the township, local community and education system in which the new school is located. Throughout the study, forces from the context -- in particular the local community -- will surface repeatedly; they influenced the school's development actively, and thus help to explain much of the behavior we noted during its planning, implementation and continued operation.

A. A Look at Lincoln Acres School and Its Community

Surrounded by a park on three sides and a forest directly in back of it, Lincoln Acres School is located in the middle of the Lincoln Acres community. It is a one-story brick building of austere, functional design. The minimal parking lot and the usually-filled bicycle racks on the side of the building identify it immediately as an elementary school.

Inside, on a typical day, there is a steady hum of activity. Almost all areas of the school are used continuously during the day for instructional purposes -- including, at times, the hallways. In the classrooms, there is usually a variety of activities in progress: a teacher working with a small group of students on a reading lesson, another small group of students working independently on a science project, pairs of students playing quiet games, and others feeding animals or working alone. Each classroom area has an adequate to abundant supply of learning materials, old sofas (for relaxed studying), plants and animals. Student art work decorates the walls. In general, the atmosphere in the school is one of cooperation between teachers and students: there is minimal emphasis on discipline; it is rare to see a teacher scolding or closely directing students.

It is in this setting that three hundred and fifty Lincoln Acres children, sorted into grades Kindergarten through six, their 18 teachers, principal and parent volunteers spend the 180 days a year the state law requires for the process of education.

The Lincoln Acres community is a moderate-size suburban housing development. Construction began in 1971, and by 1976, when building was finished, there were nearly 600 single-family homes in the community.

Residents take great care to maintain the appearance of their houses and property. The houses, most of which cost between $50,000 and $70,000, are freshly painted with bright colors, and often have elaborate ornamentation -- wrought iron work, planters and large, fancy mailboxes at the curb. Lawns are kept trimmed and carefully arranged bushes and shrubs provide landscaping in an area nearly devoid of mature trees, which were leveled to provide easy, less expensive construction.

Late-model automobiles -- usually two for each family -- dot the driveways, and periodically a mobile recreational camper sits alongside the house or an above-ground swimming pool protrudes in a backyard. Beyond these few visible displays of material possessions that, presumably, either enhance or maintain family status within the community, little else besides the model of house separates one dwelling from the other. The lasting impression one gets from driving through the curving streets of the development is not so much the feeling of sameness that early "mass society" critics of suburbia complained about, but a suggestion of a kind of intentional equality; the individuality of each house, despite obvious attempts at differentiation, falls within what seems to be a limited, acceptable, range.

On a typical week-day afternoon, it is not unusual to see two or three Indian mothers dressed in saris walking down a street, with their pre-school children either following behind or being pushed in a carriage as their mothers talk. Other people, generally mothers, and almost always white, can be seen unloading groceries from cars, walking dogs, or, depending on the time of year, working in the garden. But for the most part, during the months that school is in session, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. few people are to be seen on the streets or in the yards of Lincoln Acres. All fathers, and more than a few mothers, are away from home working. Three quarters of the mothers identify their primary role as "housewife".

But these impressions tell little about Lincoln Acres' surrounding physical and social context, and nothing about its history. The community of Lincoln Acres is part of a township, Washingtonville.

B. The Township

Lying on a plain in the middle of an industrial eastern state, Washingtonville, which was organized as a township by Dutch settlers in 1685, stretches for more than forty square miles. An hour's drive by automobile brings its residents to one of the large urban centers of the country, and it is only fifteen minutes to one of the largest cities in the state. On its northern and eastern borders are sprawling suburban communities, and to the south is a university town. Small dairy farms still operate in the communities on the western boundary, and the clusters of older houses that dot the area retain a rural character.

Passing through Washingtonville is a major interstate highway that separates the older, rural part of the township, from the recently-settled suburban communities. About one-third of the township's 15,000 residents live in the rural areas. Several small villages and isolated houses intermingle with swaths of family farms, many of which have

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fallen into disuse in the last 15 years. During the period of agricultural decline, large industrial complexes were built by local and multinational corporations, mainly in two communities which have access to major highways, with others scattered throughout the area. In the last five years small tracts of new, expensive, houses have been built on the fringes of the villages. But despite the abandonment of farming, the increase in industrial and residential land use has been gradual. For the most part, this older section of the township has not changed much from the way it was in the 1880's.

Permanent mobile trailer parks have cropped up along the interstate highway. The population of these camps is mainly older, retired people, young transient, semi-skilled factory workers, laborers and a few college students. In some respects, these trailer parks, which are steadily expanding, have replaced the migrant labor force (and the temporary quarters they occupied) which disappeared along with the farms. Otherwise, with the exception of a few widely separated diners, factories and gas stations, the highway serves mainly as a truck and commuter route between major eastern cities.

The largest community in the township, Allwood Green, was built in 1956 by a single construction company. When the mass-produced housing was finished, the community included fifteen hundred single family houses of similar design, three schools (paid for by the builder) and a church and synagogue. On the main road that borders Allwood Green, a modest shopping center -- it has no major department store -- was built. The houses originally sold for $14,000 and today, nearly twenty years later, sell for between $40,000 and $50,000.

The families in Allwood Green, many of which were first attracted to it by the low house price and proximity to the metropolis, are fairly well established, with middle-aged parents whose children are mostly in junior high schools, high school or college -- or have recently graduated and left home. In terms of occupation this community is diverse: truck drivers, technicians, salesmen, middle-management workers and college professors are the largest groups among the adult males. Quite a few wives in Allwood Green work full time outside of the home. In general, incomes in Allwood Green are lower than those in Lincoln Acres.

Although some additional houses and businesses have appeared in Allwood Green, it has not significantly changed since it was first built. Many of the current residents are the original owners of their houses.

At about the same time that Allwood Green was built, a small number of garden apartments, the only multiple family dwellings in the township, were built nearby. Together, these two new residential areas increased the population of the township from an estimated 4,528 in 1955 to approximately 14,500 in 1966. This rapid population growth did not, however, keep pace with that of many of the surrounding townships, and compared to them Washingtonville township is still mainly rural and underdeveloped.

C. The Local Community

When Lincoln Acres, the community in which Lincoln Acres school is located, was proposed by a builder in 1962, the project met with strong resistance, and a lengthy court battle. The Washingtonville residents who initiated the lawsuit feared a situation similar to the one that followed the construction of Allwood Green: inadequate provision by the builder of municipal facilities with the result of increased taxes throughout the township. In fact, opponents of further construction were powerful enough to succeed in barring all large-scale building in the township from the completion of Allwood Green in the early 1960's until 1969 when Lincoln Acres tract was approved for residential use. Because of this resistance, part of the arrangement to get residential zoning approved included the developer's donation of land for an elementary school in the community, and $80,000 toward its construction.

The first residents moved into Lincoln Acres in the summer of 1970, and by January, 1975, when this study began, there were approximately 500 single family homes occupied, with another 60 scheduled to be built. Five basic models of homes were available, which in 1970 cost between $38,000-42,000; prices increased to $50,000-70,000 in 1975. Purchasers of homes in Lincoln Acres were mainly young, upwardly-mobile, families. Few elderly or middle-aged people bought homes in the development.

Of those families answering our survey,12) 59% answered that the most important reason for moving to Lincoln Acres was "the house". This was followed in importance by the nearness of the community to place of work (17%) and the school system (17%). "To live near friends or relatives" and "low property taxes" received 3% and 0% respectively. "The

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12) Three mail surveys were sent to all parents of children in Lincoln Acres school. The first survey was administered in February, 1976 and had a response rate of 52%. The second administration, in June, 1976, had a response rate of 35%. A third wave, in June 1977, was returned by 44%. The survey data, then, do not represent a random sample but a proportion of the total population. School records will be analyzed to supplement these data, and assess possible bias in the pattern of non-response cases.

Another caveat in the interpretation of these data is that they do not provide information about the entire community, but only on those families with children in the school. No usable census data exist for the entire community at the present time. However, participant observation suggests that the majority of families without children in school are young and as yet childless or with infants. The evidence that exists tends to support the position that in major dimensions these families are similar to those with children attending school.

school system" -- to which our discussion will turn shortly -- was the second most important reason that people moved to Lincoln Acres, with 17% mentioning it.

Where did these families live before coming to Lincoln Acres? 53% of the respondents moved from large urban areas, 35% from suburban areas and 12% from rural areas.

A question that was not asked concerns whether this was the first house the family bought. From the young ages of the respondents, as well as information from participant observation, it seems safe to assume that for most this was the first home they had owned.

Occupationally, as in the age of its families, Lincoln Acres is, relatively speaking, homogeneous. A large percentage of male heads of household are professionals working in private businesses; only 9% of them own businesses or identify themselves as self-employed.

Despite recent trends toward increased employment of women, 85% responded that they are keeping house. Only 8% are working full time outside the home and 14% part time, with 2% temporarily out of work. Of the respondents, 6% of the females were attending school.

Ethnically and religiously, the community is heterogeneous. Of those answering a survey question, 30% considered themselves as being members of minority or national groups and 46% did not. Within the minority groups 12% identified themselves as Chinese, 4% as East Indian and 5% as Black. Family religious preference is 19% Protestant, 31% Catholic, 27% Jewish and 13% Buddhist.

The data on ethnicity and religious preference are incomplete, since the question was marked "optional" and 25% did not answer the ethnic question and 11% the religious question. From talks with community members, there seems to be an agreed-upon estimate that about 20% of the population is Oriental, 30% Jewish, 10% East Indian, 5% Black and the rest of varied racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Although the figures may be inaccurate it is clear that in these important areas of life -- race and ethnicity -- Lincoln Acres does not fit the popular stereotype of the suburban community.

Besides these demographic differences, orientation toward, and expectations of, the community vary considerably. Many families, especially those in management, or highly technical occupations such as those in the electronics or chemical industry, view Lincoln Acres as a place to live for only as long as a company assignment is in the locality. Others have selected it as a place in which they intend to settle permanently; although they are new residents, they feel an attachment to the community and township and actively participate in local associations and politics. Yet others view the home as an investment above all else, and are prepared to move if real estate values fluctuate or decline. Of course, to some extent, all residents have an investment in their homes but not all would move readily if property values depreciated.

Related to property values is the fact that Lincoln Acres is on the same side of the interstate highway as Allwood Green. The two communities have the same postal address, but are separated by a strip of farmland about a half-mile wide. This separation, along with higher house prices in Lincoln Acres, its newness, and the builder-assigned name, gives the two communities separate identities as well as a sense of being self-contained. Indeed, many Lincoln Acres residents exhibit a form of class bias toward Allwood Green by commenting that the houses there are smaller, less expensive and not as carefully maintained.

Countering the ability of Lincoln Acres residents to establish and maintain exclusivity is one of the peculiar features of the township: all of the communities in it are dependent for basic services on outside areas. In the case of Lincoln Acres, aside from the elementary school, no other institution -- churches, the police, hospitals, libraries or stores -- are located within the development, but are sited in other parts of the township or nearby communities. Recreation is similarly limited. Surrounding the Lincoln Acres School is a park with a ball field and tennis courts, but there is no motion picture theater in the township and only a roller skating rink and a few restaurants are sources of entertainment. Most residents, if they do not make their own entertainment, seek it in nearby cities or at one of the elaborate enclosed shopping malls in the area.

Yet another matrix of institutional arrangements ties Lincoln Acres closely to the life of Washingtonville township: local government (including the local school board). Lincoln Acres is limited in actions it can take with respect to services supplied by the community and in the policies that operate the local school. Thus, Lincoln Acres is dependent on the township for two reasons: its ecology limits its autonomy, and it is part of a larger political unit. In later sections these constraints will be elaborated.

From this brief account of the local community, it can be seen that Lincoln Acres is significantly different from the other sections of Washingtonville in two important respects: social class and life cycle (Gans, 1962). In terms of social class, Lincoln Acres is a more affluent community than any other settlement in the township. This is reflected in the house prices as well as the occupational structure of the community. From the perspective of life cycle -- an important and often overlooked variable -- the residents of Lincoln Acres are, for the most part, young families in the early to middle period of child rearing. As in most American families in this stage of the life cycle, especially middle-class families, education of the young is a primary concern.

D. The Educational System

Altogether in 1975 there were 2,025 elementary school pupils in the Washingtonville district, with 97 elementary teachers. Tradition in Washingtonville supports neighborhood elementary schools. As a result, there are seven elementary schools in the township, each with grades Kindergarten through six with enrollment ranging from 220 to 612. Two of the rural schools were built in 1928 and another in 1950. Three other elementary schools, each of which has had a recent addition, were built in 1957, 1959, and 1961 to accommodate Allwood Green. The most recent one, Lincoln Acres school, was completed in 1975, almost five years after the first houses were occupied.

A junior high school was opened in 1966; it includes 821 students currently attending school, with a faculty of 58. Before 1960, when the high school was built, students attended school in neighboring communities. The high school has since been enlarged and currently has a student body of 1,266 and a professional staff of 96. In sum, the school system is not large, but has increased in size and complexity since the early 1960's.

Organizationally, the township school district is relatively free of bureaucratic positions, especially when compared to the administrative structures of large cities. The central administrative staff consists (as of the time of our study) of the superintendent, three assistants to him, a business manager and various heads of system-wide programs such as special educational services and maintenance. Each school (with the exception of two elementary schools which share one) has its own principal. Only the high school and junior high school have vice principals and department chairmen.

In the elementary schools, besides classroom teachers, there are learning disabilities consultants who usually work in more than one school, as do teachers of specialized subjects such as music and art. Washingtonville elementary schools have a position not usually found in other school districts in the state called a "resource teacher" whose basic job, beyond some teaching, is to aid teachers in program planning and to facilitate their work. Lunch room staff and custodial personnel complete the staff. Volunteer parents are frequently used as either classroom or clerical aides.

Governing this educational structure is the Washingtonville Board of Education, a township-wide policy-making body, composed of nine members, three of whom are elected each year for a three-year term. After the board is re-constituted each year a president is elected from among the members for a one-year term. Board members receive no payment for their efforts. The superintendent of schools attends the board meetings but only in an advisory capacity and does not vote. In the fall of 1975, prior to the passage of a state "sunshine" law, designed to encourage citizen participation and discourage secrecy in local

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government, the Washingtonville Board of Education adopted its own version. According to this provision, the public is permitted to attend all Board sessions unless personnel matters or individual students are the topic of discussion.

The county board of education, the state department of education and federal agencies such as Health, Education and Welfare form an overlay on this local structure. Despite their regulations and ability to dispense funds, their control is usually indirect and weak; the local school district, partly because of tradition, retains autonomy -- especially in the critical area of the content of educational programs. However, in recent years, primarily through attempts to equalize education among localities through tax reform, the state has exerted more control over local school districts.

E. Local School Politics and Educational Programs

The rural areas of Washingtonville township have been and continue to be more politically conservative than the newer suburban communities. In elections for the township council, the local Republican party, which favors, among other things, minimal municipal services and thus low taxes, wins seats with the aid of rural votes. The predominant Democrats, whose philosophy is also fiscally conservative but favors some governmental services, court and receive votes in the suburban area. One knowledgeable, politically active resident claims that the rural areas are no longer even considered important by the Democrats, who don't actively campaign there, since they can win enough power with the suburban vote. The political pattern is not significantly different from this when educational issues are at stake.

School board elections, reflecting the view that education is above politics, are non-partisan; they usually at least appear to obey this tradition. While candidates do not run on political party tickets, they do, however, often represent well-defined constituencies. Since school board policies and the way they are formed will have importance for understanding the origin and course of Lincoln Acres school, it is worthwhile at this point to recount the trend of recent Washingtonville school politics. Educational programs are also discussed in this section because they have often been the motivation needed for various individuals and groups to enter school politics.

Allwood Green, as mentioned earlier, had an extensive impact on the rural areas of the township, particularly in education. By 1961 Allwood Green residents occupied enough seats on the Board of Education to control it; responding to their constituents, they wanted to hire a superintendent of schools who could improve and guide the rapidly expanding educational system. After a search they selected Dr. Robert Biddle who was appointed superintendent of Washingtonville Schools in 1962. Biddle, a jovial, expansive, folksy man, was a graduate of a leading school of education. Prior to coming to Washingtonville he was chief administrator of a school district 30 miles away that experienced rapid suburbanization while he was there. Eight years after this appointment, in an interviee for a national magazine, Biddle recalled Washingtonville at the time that he accepted the position as a

> ...highly centralized district with an extraordinarily good Board of Education. The principals had no authority, the teachers were scared of everybody, including themselves; all curriculum decisions were made in the central office. But it was obvious that the Board was interested in good education. The members wanted to change, to meet the needs of kids. They wanted to set policy and not be nine administrators any longer. I had had interviews all over the country -- big cities, small towns. I came here because of the Board.

1. Changes introduced by Biddle

Early in his tenure, the school board supported Biddle's efforts to introduce educational innovations into the schools. He emphasized human relations training and an organization development program for administrators and teachers; in the summer of 1963 he and all principals and central office administrators attended sessions at the National Training Laboratories in Bethel, Maine. Today, Biddle believes he has the only central administrative staff in the country who have all attended this type of training program.13)

Two outgrowths of Biddle's stress on human relations training and organizational development have been a program of using internal personnel for the training of other staff members, and a careful effort in the design and implementation of the junior high school. In the latter project outside consultants were used; the intervention and training were documented in a research report presented at the annual meetings of a national education association. This and prior training were supported with Title III federal funds.

Organization development, according to Biddle, has also increased trust between teachers and supervisors. "When I came here in 1962,"

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13) In 1970 an article by Biddle, "Sensitivity: A superintendent's view," appeared in a national professional journal. It is a review of past, current and anticipated uses of organization development in the Washingtonville schools.

Though the label "sensitivity training" was implied in the article's title, Biddle commented after reading this that he never used that word, preferring instead "group dynamics".

Biddle said in the article quoted earlier, "no one trusted anybody. Now we're using some videotape machines so teachers can evaluate their own performance. They're looking for help; they're not afraid."

Along with personnel-enhancing programs. Biddle also introduced instructional innovations. One of his favorites is a developmental physical education program for children with learning disabilities, unique in the state. Another is a community-based, work-study program for high school students, created, to some extent, to alleviate overcrowding in the high school by having students work in the community, and thus be out of the school for part of the day. The district also housed and supported a state-funded summer program for the high school-aged children of migrant farm workers; it began in 1965 and is still operating. Other programs initiated or supported by Biddle were: outdoor education, a pre-school program, research and development time for up to 25% of the faculty during summers, and a large student intern program in collaboration with a nearby state teachers college.

Changes in the structural arrangements of the schools were also introduced. Shortly after Biddle took office, Washingtonville instituted multi-graded elementary school classes. These combined students of several ages and achievement levels in an environment where each was encouraged to work at his own pace. Connected with this there was movement toward open-space education. In several instances this also involved the use of team teaching. These innovations were not found in all schools, or for that matter, throughout an entire school, but only in classes where teachers were either predisposed to undertake them or for some other reason wanted to change from the traditional pattern of teaching. By the early 1970's, the elementary schools had moved far enough in this direction that when two additions to existing schools and a new elementary school were needed because of population pressures, they were designed with open space architecture.

Biddle also created a new role in the district elementary schools: the resource teacher. This person, usually recruited from the older, more experienced teachers, provides assistance to teachers, administrators and students in the instructional program.

Finally, Biddle's administrative policy -- which reflects to some extent his educational philosophy -- is best stated in his own words. In response to a question from our project's researcher, he said:

> I believe in a strong degree of autonomy for a school building because it is an organic unit. There are certain things, however, that I will not permit; labeling kids and homogeneous grouping. We have tried to get away from blanket use of texts and workbooks -- to have a high degree of sophistication on the part of teachers and decision-making at an operational level. The major function of the central office is not to control but to

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> expand. To provide for ongoing planned change. The principal and central office ought to be facilitators, planners and help in human relations skill.

This philosophy of administration has, according to many district educators, been followed, and not only through the human relations training experiences. For example, individualization of instruction has proceeded to the extent that there is no uniform, standardized district-wide curriculum, even though there has been occasional vocal opposition to this -- and to the innovations introduced by Biddle -- by groups in the township.

2. Political changes

Beginning in 1965, a Taxpayers Association led by a resident of a rural community worked successfully to defeat the school budget in the hope of lowering taxes. In the process, criticism of the school system as being too permissive, too change-oriented and too involved with experimentation arose. After the defeat of the school budget, a group of Allwood Green residents formed an association called Citizens for Education which was intended to serve as a means for disseminating information about the school system and to identify people it considered to be qualified candidates for the Board of Education.

Dissatisfaction with the school system remained despite the efforts of Citizens for Education, which disseminated information in an attempt to defuse conservatives. In 1967 the Taxpayers Association changed to Alert Ladies Take Action (ALTA), a group formed to defeat a bond issue for additions to the high school. ALTA was unsuccessful, but the bond issue passed by only a narrow margin. Two years later, the leader of both these groups organized a slate including herself, a teacher in an Allwood Green school and an architect to run for the Board of Education. Because of resignations five seats were open. They ran on a platform criticizing the lack of a district-wide standardized curriculum for the system, and questioning the value of organizational development. Allwood Green residents, eager to maintain influence in educational matters, campaigned strenuously against the ALTA candidate and retained their seats on the Board.

In 1970, the rural-based group again made a bid to obtain seats on the Board and again had no success, in part because of weak organization. Later in the year, however, after an incident involving the arrest of two high school students for publishing an unauthorized newspaper that contained profanity and Biddle's defense of their rights, a group called Citizens League for Education and Normalcy (CLEAN),14) was formed by the

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14) CLEAN is thought to have had connections with the John Birch Society.

leadership of ALTA. This effort differed from the previous ones because it recruited from a broader spectrum of the population: influential residents of Allwood Green took active roles. Moral indignation rallied the previously inactive rural population and solidified it with conservative elements in the suburban communities.

A petition signed by 800 residents, Board of Education meetings, private meetings, and letters to the editor of the local newspaper served as a platform for the controversy and sustained it. Soon, what had begun as a response to a specific incident developed into an attack on the "permissiveness" of the educational system. Innovations in general were ridiculed and criticism of Biddle was extensive. One resident, Charles Minetta, led a campaign to have Biddle removed as superintendent.

Citizens for Education responded by defending the programs in the school but in the next Board of Education election in 1971, CLEAN supported three candidates and won two seats. From their new positions of power they pressed for fiscal conservatism and questioned board educational policies.

According to a regional newspaper, "the situation calmed down considerably in 1972 and the beginning of this year, but both men [on the Board] continued to press for more conservative board policies in education and finance." In June, 1973, both of the CLEAN-sponsored candidates resigned from the board.

Since Lincoln Acres became part of the township, it has displaced Allwood Green as the center of active liberal politics. Political power has aggressively been sought by residents of Lincoln Acres and by the time the community was only a few years old it had already either elected or appointed several key officials in town government. As we shall see in detail later, Lincoln Acres residents have taken an active role in local educational affairs, especially through the Board of Education.

Aside from the acceptance or rejection of educational innovations, another indication of political philosophy and broader cultural attitudes appears in the voting record of the various communities for the annual school budgets. The rural areas consistently defeat the budgets, while the suburbanized area residents -- although by increasingly smaller pluralities in the past few years -- vote for the passage of the budget. The suburbanites, it appears, are more willing than the rural population to support education, including some of the so-called "frills," such as organization development.

3. School finance

In this state, financial support for schools comes almost wholly from local property taxes, and substantially less from state aid; only a minor portion is from the federal government. Table 3.1 on the next page indicates the total school budget for the years 1960-61, 1965-66, 1970-71 and 1975-76, the percentage of each of these budgets that was local property taxes and the percentages spent on various areas required for running the school system.

A glance at the figures indicates that although the total budget has increased many-fold from 1960 to 1975, the percentage of support from property taxes and the proportions spent on specific categories have remained fairly constant. The increases in total budgets reflect the growth of the school population in the township and inflation.

Compared with other school districts in the state, Washingtonville spent somewhat more money per pupil. In 1974-75 the school cost per pupil, which does not include transportation and tuition, averaged $1,201[15] for the state. For the county including Washingtonville the average was $1,399, compared with $1,594 for Washingtonville. In terms of the communities surrounding the township its expenditures are, again, slightly more than others but not extremely high. East Lincoln, a suburban area, spends $1,313 per pupil; Jefferson Township, predominantly rural, spends $1,395; and Kingstown, one of the wealthiest communities in the nation, spends $2,020 per pupil.

Teachers' salaries, which form the bulk of the costs of education in Washingtonville, are ~~slightly lower~~ than, or the same as, those in surrounding communities and range from entry level of $10,000 to a maximum of $17,400.

In summary, we can say that to a large extent the type of education that the Washingtonville schools currently offer reflects the educational philosophy of the superintendent of schools. Gradual, piecemeal innovations -- human relations training and organization development, open space education, team teaching, individualization -- have marked his term in office. But, as we have seen, opposition to key aspects of Biddle's programs has occurred, with the effect of slowing their growth, not eliminating them. Out of this context came Lincoln Acres elementary school.

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15) All figures are from the annual report of the state commissioner of education on financial statistics of school districts in the school year 1974-75.

Table 3.1

Recent Washingtonville School Budgets

	1960-61	1965-66	1970-71	1975-76
Total Budget	$1,317,341(88%)*	$2,420,883(85%)	$5,873,582(87%)	$8,681,760(87%)
Instruction	57%	65%	62%	63%
Administration	3%	3%	3%	3%
Plan Operation	10%	9%	10%	11%
Transportation	7%	5%	6%	5%
Debt service	10%	12%	10%	10%
All other (maintenance, insurance, capital outlay, etc.)	13%	6%	9%	8%

*Percentages in parentheses represent the proportion of the total budget raised through local property taxes.

IV. THE EARLY PLANNING

A. The Initial Planning Group

In 1970, shortly after plans for construction of the Lincoln Acres development were approved, planning for the new school began. The Board of Education hired an architect, prospective home owners were asked to fill out census surveys in an attempt to estimate the potential school population and Superintendent Biddle formed a committee to develop the physical design of the school.

Local educators, including those considering transferring to the new school, were asked by Biddle to volunteer if they were interested in making input into the design of the school building. At early meetings, approximately twelve educators attended, but this rapidly narrowed to a regularly-attending group. Its members were Lois Ballantine, an elementary teacher in the district; Sam Pennington, who became the resource teacher in the school; Sandra Georgine, who joined the faculty as a primary teacher in the second year; Lee Whitmore, who was one of the physical education instructors during the first year; and Brenda Spencer, who considered applying for a position in the school but decided not to. Anthony Smith, an assistant to the superintendent, and Mal Portnoy, the principal of two rural elementary schools, also participated regularly. Astrid Little, also an assistant to the superintendent, who later became a candidate for the new school's principalship, coordinated this committee and acted as a liaison between the committee, Biddle, and the architect.

No citizens were asked to participate on this committee; the only person not a local educator who had continuous input into the project was the architect.

Since this group had been formed by the superintendent of schools, it had considerable power, in the sense that its recommendations would influence design decisions. There was no question of its legitimacy: the task of the group was to design a school that would, in all probability, be constructed. Indeed, those with the most formal authority in the school system, the superintendent and his staff, not only granted authority to the group but participated in the decision-making themselves.

Roughly speaking, the plan was to formulate a physical design that reflected the committee's current educational thinking as soon as possible. The main pressure for quick action was that in a short time the first residents would be occupying homes in Lincoln Acres, and a school was proposed as part of the new community.

B. Initial Design Work

The basic question the initial planners posed for themselves was: "What ought the school be able to allow us to do with the new faculty?" The answer, quickly arrived at, was that the building should allow for flexibility: its physical design should be one that, in Astrid Little's words, "will be useful fifty years from its construction." Generally, the educators' thinking reflected the open space concept of education that the district had gradually been moving toward since Biddle's arrival. In fact, by this time, open education had become so much a part of the thinking of district educators that two additions to existing elementary schools that were to be built at the same time as Lincoln Acres school were also open space facilities. "Eggcrates," the term used by Biddle and Smith (and eventually by the principal of the new school) for self-contained classroom buildings, were not included in the plans for the future of education in Lincoln Acres.

As the group saw it, the basic design support for open education, which also coincided with the desire for flexibility, was a minimum use of stationary walls in instructional areas. As it turned out, only one person in the design group thought the school should be built with stationary internal walls. The general concept agreed on emphasized a building that would permit either self-contained classrooms or open space, depending on the preferences of the yet-to-be-hired faculty. This was a key decision in the physical design of the school.

During discussions with the architect, several ideas developed by the committee had to be eliminated because of their high construction cost. Among these were a dome on part of the building to allow natural light in, electrical outlets in the floor, and a sunken instructional area. Two important design recommendations incorporated into the plans were a glass-enclosed, outdoor atrium in the middle of the building, and separation of the instructional area from the gymnasium and multi-purpose room, so these facilities could be used by community groups after school hours without interfering with pupil and teacher working space and materials. Basically, then, the committee designed the outline of a building, which in the case of the instructional area was four permanent exterior walls.

The committee did not use school design consultants to aid with creation of the instructional area plans. However, State Department of Education specialists were used to provide the specifications in technical areas such as kitchen design. In other specialized areas, such as the first aid room, district school nurses were consulted. The head of school maintenance for the school district contributed ideas for the layout of the building and fixtures, such as desk and table design. The only other issues taken into consideration in the planning were that the building meet state space, construction and fire-law requirements.

Biddle, who had acquired expertise in school construction planning early in his career as an administrator in a district that had built a school each year, had the dominant input into the design. As Sam Pennington recalled:

> Bob Biddle is a powerful figure. He is one of the brightest people I have ever met in education. Sometimes it's hard to tell how much a comment by Bob influences a decision. Bob doesn't come down on you. He comes out with interesting and good ideas, defends them well and it's all based on what is good for kids -- within constraints.

Another influential figure in the design process was Mal Portnoy, the principal of the Wright and Sawyer elementary schools. He spent a substantial amount of time reviewing the plans with Biddle, as did Anthony Smith. Smith, perhaps reluctant to experience the problems associated with a new school, did not apply for the position of principal of Lincoln Acres school.

From all accounts, the design process, which lasted approximately six months, was smooth -- since the major participants, all volunteers, were essentially in agreement. The result was that the committee, including Biddle, Little and Pennington, were reasonably satisfied with the final design.*

The architect's plans, worked out in interaction with the committee, were approved by the Board in late 1971.

C. Biddle's Vision: A Summary

Bob Biddle was so central in the initial planning that it is instructive to recount his vision of the educational program for the Lincoln Acres school as he saw it nearly three years after the initial planning. When the new principal was to appear on the scene, Biddle was asked what he thought the school would be like, he responded with a broad overview:

> The major focus is on educational change and the change process. How do you create an institution that responds to the changing needs of society and the needs of individual kids, but at the same time planning and creating a situation where change is the main process and the focus of the institution? Innovations in this country

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* Robert Biddle commented after reading this that the committee wanted more than they finally proposed, because of dollar constraints -- for example, the sunken teaching area for the kindergarten was eliminated.

> have been taken as ends in themselves, rather than as answers to problems. In this school we want a re-definition of education, a re-definition of the role of the teacher, a re-definition of the institution of the school, a re-definition of the parents' involvement in the school, and a re-definition of education as opposed to instruction, which is all that education is today. Reading and writing are not education.* What is my view of education? Education is a set of learning experiences designed to help each youngster learn how to do, how to create a better society.

This is an idealistic image of what the school can become, cast in the moral, world-changing and redeeming rhetoric that educators often use to legitimate their efforts. Stripped of the inflated claims, however, this statement strongly suggests that Biddle viewed the school as a departure from the other schools and educational programs in the district; it would be, in his view, an active attempt to change education in a way that would make it more responsive to student, teacher, parent -- even societal -- needs.

According to Biddle, to achieve these goals the new school would:

> ...need an organizational structure, not a vertical one that presently exists in the schools, but a horizontal one -- kids with groups of adults. The function of the adults here would be to help the kids become involved. Groups would be autonomous. Decisions would be made on the basis of a systematic analysis of data. We'd use an assessment rather than an evaluation of classes because evaluation implies a value judgement. All that stuff that comes from industry -- management by objectives -- that's all bullshit. The most important thing is the relationships people work within.

The curriculum or learning activities of the new school, as he had envisioned them, would reflect his view of the importance of people as educators.

> My definition of curriculum is the interaction of people in the process of studying something. We need a high degree of trust, competency, planning skills, imagination and creativity. A complementary relationship develops between school, home and community. We will organize in

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* After reading this, Biddle said he did not want to be understood as being unconcerned with cognitive learning. "Reading, writing and arithmetic must be deliberately taught and learned as efficiently and effectively as possible," he noted.

> teams, each responsible for a group of kids. It would be a multi-age group, the focus would be on the developmental aspects of the kids, their motor development, sensory development, etc.

As a result of the emphasis on human relations in the school, Biddle tended to see the curriculum in terms of the organizational structure of the school and the non-cognitive needs of children. Indeed, he seldom mentioned traditional curricular areas -- reading, writing, arithmetic -- and minimized their importance.* Again, underneath what appears to be fanciful speculation is a vision of education that is fundamentally different from much educational practice in America.

Concerning his relationship with the school and the role of the principal, Biddle's remarks were:

> The principal will have most of the decision-making power and I will serve as catalyst, monitor, helping person, freeing-agent, in a supporting role helping process clarification.

Biddle clearly had a holistic image of what he thought the school should become. In his view, however, the bulk of the detailed planning was to occur when the faculty had been selected and formed: in effect, they would fill in the sketch of the school that he had developed. He emphasized the incompleteness of his vision by saying:

> Concerning the new school building, Lincoln Acres is just a barn, a warehouse. It's got to be flexible, that's all. The biggest restrictions on the project are in the minds of people.

When viewed in the context of the educational programs and administrative policies that Biddle had developed since he became superintendent of Washingtonville schools, this outline of the new school is less a radical departure from his previous efforts than a logical extension of them. In effect, it combined elements of various programs that were scattered throughout the district; placed together in one school, these programs would form a cohesive unity, complement each other and, it was anticipated, reach their full potential. However, the particular educational practices and programs that would be put into the new school were left unspecified. Team teaching, multi-graded classes and the use of a resource teacher, among other things, were all likely candidates -- but were not definite parts of the plan. As we have seen, even open-space education was intended to be an option for the faculty. Instead of concrete practices, the key goals or "vision" of the school as Biddle and the early planners saw them were the concept of flexibility, and an opportunity for the faculty to fashion their own brand of education -- as long as it contained substantial portions of the innovations that had been introduced into the district and were becoming more widely used.

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* After reading this, Biddle said the characterization was "inaccurate."

In sum, then, the need for the new school came primarily out of the local tradition of neighborhood elementary schools: a new population needed a new school. Educational ideas that informed its design, at least in the early stages, were a collection of practices, objectives, and philosophies that already existed in the school district. What made this school different, that is, "innovative," was that for the first time in Washingtonville all of the varied programs that were being developed could be located in one school, and used throughout the entire school, not only where a few teachers had the inclination to use strategies such as team teaching or use of open space.

So much for the initial planning work carried out by the school district's professionals. We need to turn back now, to an event in the community that came to have a strong influence on the making of the Lincoln Acres school -- the formation of a voluntary community association.

D. The Formation of LAHA

No entirely local civic organizations existed when the first residents arrived in Lincoln Acres in 1970; aside from organizations such as the Jaycees, Boy Scouts and religious associations, there was little formal opportunity for neighbors to meet each other or discuss common problems. During the fall of 1971, when there were nearly two hundred families in the community, a group of fifteen residents began the formation of what was to become the Lincoln Acres Homeowners Association (LAHA). The basic purpose of the organization, as conceived by its organizers, was enabling homeowners to obtain better services from the builder. A central organizer, Michael Karalis, explained to the researcher that:

> There was no community interest or civic pride. The only binding interest was the developer and problems with him. Over the back fences we came to realize we had similar problems -- people became familiar with each other.

In October, 1971, a hall was rented in a local parochial school and flyers announcing a meeting were distributed. One hundred and fifty people, representing approximately half of the homes in Lincoln Acres, attended. A temporary speaker was elected and a steering committee was formed to write a constitution and bylaws. At this meeting, its founders presented the association's primary purpose as an attempt to create a stronger relationship with the builder. During the course of the meeting, however, it became apparent that there were other concerns in the community: some residents complained that they didn't know their neighbors, several wanted "STOP" signs installed at dangerous intersections, and others were interested in arranging car pools for getting to work.

There was a second meeting in January, 1972 to ratify the constitution prepared by the steering committee. Three hundred people attended, and the vote was 140 in favor and 160 opposed to the constitution. The major criticism which led to the rejection was that many residents felt the constitution defined the activities and powers of the organization too narrowly. Problems also developed over the amount that should be collected for dues, the name of the organization and membership regulations.

A newly-constituted steering committee drafted a second constitution which changed the dues, specified membership privileges and gave strong authority to the president. The new constitution was ratified overwhelmingly by three hundred Lincoln Acres residents in April, 1972. A month later, elections were held and Michael Karalis, one of the initial organizers, became LAHA's first president. Membership at this time was three hundred and fifty, representing almost two thirds of the households in the community.

The new organization's first action was to form committees for civic and community affairs, cultural and social activities, youth affairs, membership and education. Shortly after the organizational structure was completed, LAHA turned its attention to several local problems. A proposed extension to the East Coast Parkway was to border Lincoln Acres and zoning variance was being sought for construction of a shopping center on the interstate highway near the development. These projects, which would increase traffic through the new community, were perceived as threats to local property values, and LAHA lobbied against them. Both projects were stopped. It is not clear that LAHA's influence actually caused the halt; it seems safe to conclude, however, that their efforts had some impact.

Karalis, as LAHA president, participated actively at township meetings, but according to him, "it meant nothing." As an alternative strategy to obtain local power for Lincoln Acres, LAHA began a voter registration drive: three hundred and ten residents were registered. Following this, LAHA was successful in getting the township to redistrict what was formerly the Jefferson Park polling section so that Lincoln Acres would have its own voting district.

Adhering to its original intent, LAHA also sent a questionnaire to residents to find out if they had problems with the builder. From the data collected homeowner concerns were presented to the builder; his cooperation with LAHA then, as now, has been good.

E. The Bond Issue

Once the architectural plans had been completed and approved by the Board of Education, the problem shifted to finding financial support for the school construction. The builder had donated land and $80,000, but a bond issue was needed for construction to begin. In the proposed referendum, $1,520,000 was estimated for construction of the Lincoln Acres school, $1,061,000 for an Oxford school addition, and $747,000 for an Eastland Junction addition. Enrollment was in fact expected to increase in the latter two schools, but the political reality was that unless other parts of the township were included in the bond issue it was unlikely they would vote to support a project that would enhance only one area of the township -- especially the most affluent one.

To begin building support for the bond issue, Biddle contacted the head of the LAHA education committee, Sam Schwartz, and arranged a meeting with committee members and other residents interested in the school. On July 18, 1972, at Schwartz's house, Biddle presented the plans for the school. The concept of open space education was discussed and presented as being flexible.

Two weeks later, at the invitation of LAHA, Biddle presented the school plans to the entire membership. He told them that for the school to be built the bond issue would have to be approved by the township voters in October, 1972. At this meeting the LAHA education committee distributed a questionnaire to its membership titled: "What Turns You On or Off About the New School Proposal?" The instructions and areas covered in the questionnaire are shown in Chart 4.1.

LAHA education committee members collected the questionnaires on August 16, 1972 and the results were presented at the next general membership meeting, September 14, 1972.

The response rate to the questionnaire was low but some of the information was helpful. For instance, many who answered indicated that they would like a lunch program in the school. No lunch facility had been originally planned, but in response to this finding one was added. Two other concerns surfaced at the September 14 meeting. The first was raised by a group of about 25 of the 200 residents present who didn't want a neighborhood school; they preferred having their children continue attending Fernwood school in Allwood Green. These parents thought the distance of the Fernwood school from Lincoln Acres would insure that their children would eat in school and not return home in the middle of the day (thus preventing mothers from holding jobs). A more general concern was fear that the new school's construction would cause a substantial rise in property taxes.

Biddle and Board of Education members who attended the meeting answered questions on these and other issues to the satisfaction of most people present. Afterward, a motion from the floor that LAHA support the bond issue was approved. At the same meeting, the members formulated -- and in the following weeks conducted -- a campaign of home visits, advertisements in the local paper and coffee-klatches to promote the bond issue passage. LAHA was assisted in all this by members of the central administrative staff and several of the educators who had participated in the initial physical design of the school.

CHART 4.1

LAHA QUESTIONNAIRE

Mark each item of MOST concern with (++) and those of moderate concern with a (+). Please write in your comments; use the back of the page for additional comments.

Evaluation Subject

__________ Home Values
Comments:

__________ Lunch Arrangements
Comments:

__________ Taxes
Comments:

__________ Expansion of Fernwood School
Comments:

__________ Builders contribution now in escrow
Comments:

__________ Bussing or Walking
Comments:

__________ Traffic
Comments:

__________ Neighborhood School
Comments:

__________ Facilities for after-school and community activities
Comments:

__________ Intra-community attendance and participation
Comments:

__________ Split Sessions
Comments:

In the course of the LAHA-sponsored campaign for support, the primary detailed information concerning the bond issue most residents received appeared in the Board of Education's pamphlet, "Crowded: And More to Come!" This eight-page pamphlet described all three proposed buildings -- the two additions and the new school. In it the Lincoln Acres school is described as a 500-student elementary school with the following facilities:

18 Classrooms
2 Kindergartens
1 Library
1 Multipurpose room
1 Music room
1 Physical Development room
A Kitchen
Administrative office
Small instructional area
Music area and storage

Under a heading in the pamphlet called "design," the following paragraph appears:

> These buildings are designed as simply as possible in order that the community may profit from new construction methods and materials and reap whatever benefits may be obtained in lowered construction costs. Such construction will also permit us to provide a great deal of flexibility in future building use. For example, most of the inside walls will be demountable partitions. These partitions will reduce costs somewhat and will permit teachers to rearrange spaces in order to meet specific teaching and learning needs which develop during the next 25-50 years.

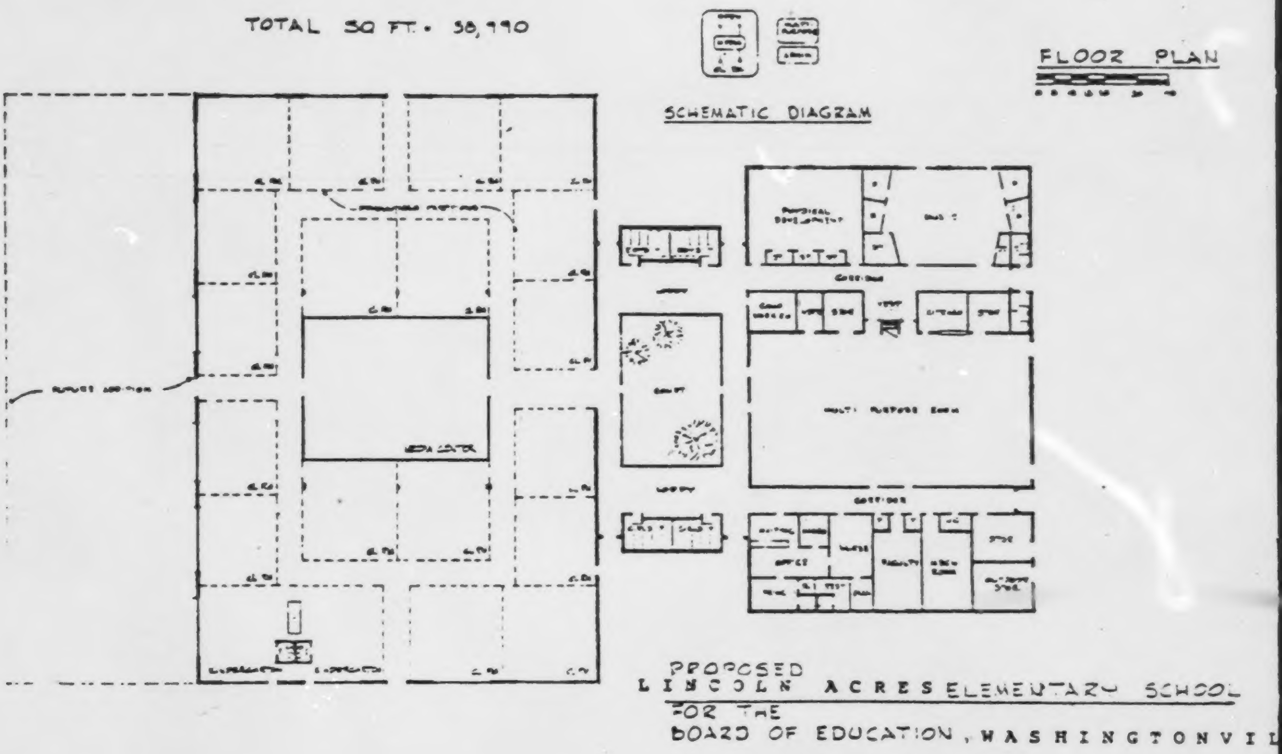
Included in the pamphlet is a schematic diagram of the Lincoln Acres school. It is reproduced, as Diagram I.

On October 17, 1972, Washingtonville voters approved the bond issue -- by a large margin in Lincoln Acres, and with a narrow endorsement in the rest of the township.

During the summer of 1972, before passage of the bond issue, LAHA took one other action that affected the school. Some members were not satisfied with the location the builder had proposed for the school on the corner of two main, but not heavily travelled, streets. They suggested that the site be moved to the middle of a parcel of land set aside for a park. The builder cooperated, and the school was constructed in the park; a stream trickles a hundred yards from the front of the school and almost immediately in back of it there is a forest.

DIAGRAM I

ARCHITECT'S OUTLINE FOR LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL


TOTAL SQ FT. 38,990
SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM
FLOOR PLAN
MEDIA CENTER
COURT
MULTI PURPOSE ROOM
CORRIDOR
OFFICE
FACULTY
PROPOSED
LINCOLN ACRES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FOR THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTONVI

Notes: The instructional area appears as the large rectangle at the left. The school as constructed varied in several respects from the diagram. First, the instructional area went through several rearrangements; these will be detailed in subsequent diagrams. Second, the block of rooms including the principal's office and faculty room was exchanged with the block for physical development and music.

After this initial flurry of activity LAHA continued to mediate between the homeowners and the builder but otherwise became relatively inactive. Their only major project until May, 1973, was their support of Sylvia Peabody, a Lincoln Acres resident, who ran successfully for the Board of Education.

F. Principal Selection

With the bond issue approved, construction of the school began; the social system of the school now increasingly became the focus of attention. In May, 1973, Biddle began recruiting members of an advisory committee to the superintendent which was to screen candidates for the position of principal of the new school. The committee was to be composed of parents from the Lincoln Acres community and an equal number of local educators.

To select the community members, Biddle asked for help from LAHA. The LAHA education committee co-chairperson at the time, Barbara Berger, began recruiting, as did Sam Schwartz, the former chairman. Barbara Berger recalled the recruitment for the advisory committee as follows:

> Dr. Biddle approached me as the head of the LAHA education committee. We had a committee meeting and asked people to sign up and write questions they would ask of a candidate. Charles Frisch was the co-chairman of the education committee at the time, but didn't have time to participate in the selection. I felt that everyone on the list had the same point of view as me -- liberal. So, I asked people with other viewpoints. All those who signed up originally were my friends. So I asked Sam Schwartz and Michael Karalis, who were both conservatives, and they said they would do it.

In addition to Schwartz, Berger and Karalis (who was no longer president of LAHA), Shirley Potter and Carol Witterstein, both former teachers, were selected for the advisory committee. This group reflected an attempt to represent the ethnic, religious, educational, and political views of the community.

Biddle then requested teacher volunteers for the advisory committee. Selected for the committee were Sam Pennington, Lois Ballantine, Bobbie Hanson, Barbara Soames and Jane Marsten. Pennington, a teacher at Oxford school, had participated on the building design committee and was interested in transferring to the new school. All the others were teachers in Washingtonville elementary schools; Jane Marsten was also a resident of Lincoln Acres. Anthony Smith, an assistant to the superintendent, was given the task of coordinating the work of the committee.

With instructions from Biddle that their task was to screen candidates and make recommendations to him, the committee began meeting in mid-December, 1973. It met twice and sometimes three times a week until February 12, 1974.

They began by developing a set of criteria for the position of principal. The procedure used was "brainstorming" -- anyone could suggest items, and these were listed without premature criticism. The finally-agreed-on list, presented in Chart 4.2, is fairly comprehensive.

Following the development of criteria, each member of the committee went through the folders of the approximately sixty candidates who had responded to advertisements in the New York Times and professional education journals. Eight other applications were from people already employed in the district.16) The central administration's policy was that all in-district candidates were to receive an interview -- that is, would not be screened and possibly rejected at the early stages of the selection process. After the initial screening, each member of the committee (with the exception of Anthony Smith, who only facilitated the task) made up a list of fifteen out-of-district candidates. Members then presented their choices to the rest of the group with a discussion of each candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Since the ten initial lists had a high degree of overlap, there was little difficulty in arriving at a consensus for a single list of fifteen candidates to be interviewed by the committee. Anthony Smith then scheduled interviews for the candidates and the committee took as its next task formulation of a set of questions and procedures for conducting the interviews.

The interview guide, completed on January 16, 1974, was used, with only minor changes, for all candidates. The seven questions that composed the interview appear in Chart 4.3.

The committee decided to rotate leadership, have each interview last at least a half hour, and allow each member of the committee to ask one of the pre-selected questions or a probing question. After the interview, each member was to rate the candidate on a scale of 1-5 for each response.

Once the candidates had been interviewed, the committee had to decide on a method for narrowing the list to the four or five the superintendent had requested. In addition, they needed a way to present the recommendations to Biddle. They decided to have each member rank-order

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16) The eight in-district candidates were David Hauptmann, the principal of Fernwood school; Alberta Bard, an administrator at the junior high school; Astrid Little, an assistant to Biddle; Imogene Miller, the director of CIPED (a student work-experience program); and Robert Stewart, Michael Pierce and Anne Heinz, teachers.

CHART 4.2

CRITERIA FOR PRINCIPAL SELECTION

The Screening Committee is looking for the following characteristics in the candidates, and will rate them on a scale of 1-5, 1 representing few of the characteristics, 5, most of all.

I. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
  A. Individualized approach:
    1. She/he encourages positive, relaxed environment
    2. She/he fosters innovation, creativity
    3. She/he is concerned with the total child, not just curriculum
  B. Commitment to growth:
    1. She/he seeks community involvement and participation
    2. She/he is committed to teacher-training and on-going growth
    3. She/he is receptive to change

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY
  A. The administrative process:
    1. She/he makes decisions
    2. She/he delegates some decision-making powers
    3. She/he completes tasks, showing consistency
    4. She/he is flexible and accessible
    5. She/he facilitates
    6. She/he is supportive of, to, for teachers
  B. Technical skills:
    1. She/he is trained in planning and budgeting
    2. She/he is skilled in organizational development
    3. She/he uses evaluation and supervision for growth
    4. She/he has a good track record and uses experience widely

III. HUMANIST
  A. Personality:
    1. She/he is intelligent, sharp and inventive
    2. She/he has warmth and is energetic
    3. She/he is a listener
    4. She/he is secure and self-confident
  B. Viewpoints:
    1. She/he believes people come before products
    2. She/he relates well to children
    3. She/he reacts in a calm, analytical manner
    4. She/he is sensitive to teachers' strengths and weaknesses

CHART 4.3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES

Introduction of the committee to the candidate. Candidate asked to tell about him/herself.

1. What is your concept of the administrator's role in getting the school going, and in continuing its development? What skills do you have to make that happen? (Michael)

2. What is your idea of how children learn? (Sam)

3. A parent calls you to say that their child has brought home a book which the parent feels any child should not be reading, and asks you to prevent teachers from using this material. What would your reaction be? (Barbara)

4. How do you see children with special needs -- gifted to learning disabled -- functioning? (Michael)

5. You'll be hiring teachers for the new school. What will you be looking for?

6. How do you see the principal's role in evaluating teacher performance and fostering teacher growth? Specifically, what would you be looking for, and what procedures would you use? (Sam)

7. How much and in what way would you utilize community and/or parental involvement? (Barbara)

the five he or she considered most qualified. Again there was a considerable overlap of candidates on these lists. In cases of disagreement the candidates were rated on the 1-5 scale by each committee member and their rank was determined by the aggregate ratings. A list of five candidates[17] was then put in order of preference and given to Biddle on February 12, 1974. The memorandum from the screening committee to Biddle read:

> During the past several months we have reviewed approximately sixty applications for the position of Principal of the Lincoln Acres Elementary School. We have interviewed fourteen candidates for the position and discussed the qualifications of each rather thoroughly.
>
> It is the recommendation of this Committee that the following applicants be considered by you for this position. They are listed in the order of choice by the Committee.
>
> Mr. Ellis Brown
> Mrs. Alberta Bard
> Mr. Martin Haber
> Mr. Peter Hess
> Mrs. Astrid Little

It should be noted that several types of conflict had existed in the screening committee. One was over the different views of the process the group should use to accomplish its task. The teachers, two of whom were trained in group dynamics methods, wanted adherence to a particular set of meeting rules and procedures. Parent members, uncomfortable with this, developed a ritualized response to reduce the threat they felt; when the teachers used terms such as "facilitator" and "hidden agenda," parents joked about it. Parents and teachers had different backgrounds and thus dissimilar approaches to the task: Karalis, a labor relations negotiator, was the skeptical, businessman type and the other parents were similar. In contrast, Pennington and the other teachers wanted an open, "trustful" atmosphere on the committee and toward candidates. The parents' suspicion of the ethic of "trust" was reinforced by some evidence that teacher committee members had briefed the in-district candidates before they were to be interviewed.

Generally, although the degree of cooperation and productivity varied over the course of the committee's life, all members interviewed recalled many meetings, especially the early ones, as being full of tension between parent and teacher members.

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17) Of these candidates only Alberta Bard and Astrid Little were in-district people. The outsiders were all from other states.

To gain a better image of the finalists and provide a basis for an informed decision, the committee members decided to visit their schools. One group, headed by Smith, went to upstate New York to visit a principal. Biddle, Berger, Pennington and Potter visited Ellis Brown's school in Colville, New Hampshire. The school was an open space building in a rural area and Brown was a teaching principal. After talking with teachers and students and observing the school, Biddle and the members of the committee assessed the situation positively and regarded Brown as a good candidate.

On the way to New Hampshire, when Pennington, the only teacher in the group, was out of the car, Biddle told Berger and Potter that he would like to see Imogene Miller, an in-district candidate, become the principal of Lincoln Acres school. When Barbara Berger returned to Lincoln Acres, she reported Biddle's preference for principal to the LAHA executive committee. At about the same time, Karalis had heard rumors that Biddle was going to recommend someone to the Board of Education who was not on the screening committee's list of finalists.

After he returned from New Hampshire, Biddle refused to accept the list of candidates that had been presented to him by the committee, claiming that he wanted criteria for the selection of finalists and reasons for having rejected the other people interviewed. He then submitted three names to the Board of Education for possible appointment as principal. His first choice, Imogene Miller, did not appear on the committee's list of five top candidates, but the other two, Astrid Little and Alberta Bard, did.

The parent members of the committee were infuriated by Biddle's action. In violation of Biddle's ground rule that the selection process remain within the committee, Karalis asked to discuss the matter with the Board of Education president. A meeting with a group of parents at Karalis' home was arranged; after hearing their complaints the Board president indicated that he was concerned with what had occurred. The LAHA education committee then sent a letter to the Board of Education; it did not endorse a candidate, but insisted that the superintendent make his first choice recommendation from the list of candidates. Several weeks later, after the Board had interviewed the finalists, it was announced that Ellis Brown was appointed principal of Lincoln Acres School.18)

In 1975, when he reflected on the events around the hiring of the principal, Karalis said:

> We worked hard and then not to take our recommendation hurt. But some superintendents aren't as

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18) Biddle said to the researcher late that year that Brown had been his second choice.

> earnest as Biddle -- they wouldn't even have a committee. I think that Biddle wanted to promote somebody from within. That can be a good policy.

Biddle, too, formed a lasting impression of the Lincoln Acres selection process.

> The hiring process that I used I will never use again. I believe ideally and theoretically in the involvement of parents, teachers and educators on the committee level, but, I'll never use it again because I do not find, unless people are trained as observers and in group process, that it works. Next time I will do it myself.

G. Analysis and Commentary

1. Vision development

The original vision of the school, as it was expressed in the architectural design, remained largely unaltered four years later when the principal was selected. "Flexibility" was still the cornerstone of the plan, the community was informed of the plans for open space education, and the principal who was hired had had experience in a similar school. At this point, the vision remained a deliberately rough sketch, rather than a complete design.

2. Actualization

The linkages between plans and implementation were not strong. Although other teachers participated with the expectation of joining the new faculty, the only teacher involved in all planning phases was Sam Pennington. Biddle had either been directly involved in, or closely monitored, all aspects of the planning and thus provided continuity in the plans. His general intent to serve as a "catalyst... helping person, freeing agent" in relation to the new principal was a proposed form of planning-implementation linkage; whether it would materialize remained to be seen.

Finally, the criteria used in the search for a principal was intended to maximize selection of a person whose views would act as a linkage between planning and implementation.

The vagueness of the initial plans reduced the possibility that they would be altered, or that they would not be implemented; at this time nothing seemed specific enough to change, or to fail in achievement. The plans for flexibility were themselves flexible.*

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* After reading this, Biddle commented that there was nothing at all vague about the plans. So to him they were explicit and clear.

3. Political stabilization

The implicit strategy of this period was one of incremental educational change; the school was not presented as a radical departure but as the combination of several educational innovations that were already standard practice in the school system. Whether it was intended or not, the political strategy also was a gradualist one. Educators were included in the process initially, warding off the possible charge that an innovation was being foisted upon them without warning or consultation. Similarly, after LAHA took initiative in having the location of the school changed, the school administration included them peripherally in the funding process, and then as co-equals with the educator members of the advisory screening committee for the principal.

Relations with the community were cordial during the bond issue campaign, but somewhat strained in the process of selecting a principal. If we compare the two processes, one striking difference is that in the case of the bond issue the important decisions -- to have a flexible school with a particular physical design -- were made by educators and presented to the community for ratification. In the instance of the principal selection, Biddle gave both educators and parents equal advisory powers, not the power to make the actual selection. Apparently, however, both groups, but especially the parents, developed a sense of investment in their nominees -- and subsequently a feeling that Biddle had not seriously considered their advice when he proposed a person not on their final list of candidates. They demanded -- and finally received -- more power* than they had been initially granted when the opportunity to make an important decision arose.19)

Biddle's strategy for coopting the community leadership was successful in the case of the bond issue. But the strategy set a precedent for continued participation -- and it may also have felt less like cooptation to the community than an opportunity to actually influence the plans for the school. Whether this interpretation is correct or not,* it is clear that the community leadership successfully exercised its power and thwarted Biddle's effort to place his candidate in the principal's office of the new school.

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* Biddle said after reading this that the committee did not receive more power. That seems to be formally correct, but the committee did in fact take more power -- exerted more influence -- than they originally had a license for.

19) An interesting aspect of this is that Karalis and Berger seem to have been fully aware at the time that they were overstepping the role in principal selection which they had agreed to. Karalis claimed that objections to Miller, Biddle's first choice, were so great that "the community would have eaten her alive" had she become principal. He also felt that she would be a puppet for Biddle. These predictions may have been reasonable, but they were also rationalizations for his taking power not granted to him.

4. Knowledge utilization

Utilization of outside knowledge was minimal in the design of the school building. State Department of Education specialists and the architect were the only outside experts. Of course, Biddle had developed expertise in school construction planning through previous experience, and the other educators who participated had developed similar stocks of knowledge. But no systematic attempt was made to survey the design of other open space schools, nor were any educational consultants used. The basic operating principle was to use internal resources as much as possible.

The pattern of reliance on internal resources is also apparent in the principal selection process, but in a slightly different form. The three names that Biddle recommended to the board were all in-district educators. Only two of the five recommendations of the screening committee were from Washingtonville, and their first choice, Brown, was from another state. Biddle's policy may have been to promote an inside person and thus provide opportunities and incentive within the district. Additionally, he could have preferred Miller because he was thoroughly familiar with her or because he wanted to be able to retain control over the school through a hand-picked principal. At any rate, he displayed a local orientation, while the committee, for any number of possible reasons, went outside of the district. One possibility is that the parents on the committee thought an outside person would be likely to develop the school as they wanted it, and would be less dominated by Biddle than would an insider beholden to him for the position.

In sum, the vagueness of the early plans, together with the gradualist approach to realizing them, permitted considerable maneuverability for the central administration. An opposite effect of this strategy was that avoiding firm commitments created the impression that every constituency would eventually be satisfied. With these conditions, there was much potential for later misunderstanding.

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* Biddle thought this was a "bad observation," and said:

> I never coopted anyone in my life, nor deliberately set out to do so.

We are using the word "coöptation" simply to refer to the process of gaining the support of opposing forces. But the question of whether Biddle approached this deliberately or not (or even expected that having the committee would help to defuse opposition) remains open.

V. INTENSIVE PLANNING BEGINS: FORMING A FACULTY

Orderliness, a dimension of reality frequently imposed in retrospect along with meaning, was not especially characteristic of the principal selection process. But it did find its way into several other early processes of planning for the Lincoln Acres school. After Brown had been selected, the next major events were his arrival and selection of a faculty for the school. Before we describe the teacher recruitment process, however, a brief account of the new principal's background and vision of the new school should prove useful.

A. The New Principal's Background

Before he accepted the principalship of Lincoln Acres school, Ellis Brown was a young teaching principal in Colville, New Hampshire, a rural town near the Canadian border with a population of approximately 1,000. Colville is an old Yankee village with a faltering dairy-farm economy, some lumbering and a recently built furniture factory which employs a large portion of the local labor force at wages below federal minimum. Farms have been sold piecemeal, as urbanites have purchased parcels for summer homes, while the farmers, reluctant to leave, turn to factory work and till their reduced acreage part time. Many French Canadians have recently filtered into the area in search of work. Generally, much of the population of Colville is underpaid, transient, and poorly educated; some are non-English-speaking.

A new elementary school was built in Colville to replace a ninety-year old building. Open space education and the architectural design of the new building had been presented by the regional superintendent to the community primarily as an economy measure; fewer internal walls and less heating meant reduced construction and operating expenses. Open space construction was also acceptable because it recalled a familiar image -- the one-room school. Beneath the publicly-stated reasons, the school district administration also had a hesitant interest in trying new forms of education.

In a recruitment process which included probes at nearby colleges and universities, Brown was contacted by the Colville school district and asked if he was interested in the position of teaching principal. At the time he was a doctoral student specializing in educational administration at the University of Massachusetts. After interviews by the assistant superintendent and the Board of Education, Brown was offered the position, accepted it, and began work in September, 1972. According to Brown:

> My biggest qualification for getting a job in New Hampshire was that I was a graduate of a New Hampshire high school -- not that I was a doctoral student at

> the University of Massachusetts. "I took the Colville position because it was more interesting than other offers -- it wasn't an egg-crate [school].

During the summer before the school opened, Brown hired five teachers for the new school and retained two who had worked in the old building. He also hired four parents as teacher aides. In the hiring process he looked for people who were young, with a considerable amount of time to spend in school and with some specialty such as outdoor education, physical education or musical ability. The newly-recruited faculty was then arranged into two teaching teams: the lower team had four teachers and two aides, working with seventy children in grades Kindergarten through four and special education. The upper team, working with eighty children in grades five through eight also had four teachers (including Brown) and two aides. According to Brown the teams decided how they were going to organize and deliver instruction; decision making was primarily by consensus and often involved the students.

Relations between the school and community were fairly good. After a few weeks of school, several problems with individual parents arose: individualization of student work was not clear in a few cases; the idea of a fifth grade student working with an eighth-grade student in academic areas was questioned by parents. When Brown arrived, the parents' association was almost non-existent, and he succeeded in encouraging more participation in it. This group became primarily involved in fund raising activities, and was especially successful with sponsoring and organizing Bingo nights. About half of the faculty attended these and other fund-raising events, giving teachers and parents an opportunity to know one another on a face-to-face basis. However, overall, only four or five families out of the eighty families with children in the school became extensively involved with school activities. "It was," Brown recollected, "a surprisingly quiet community."

In November, 1973, as he was starting his second year at Colville, Brown responded to an advertisement in the New York Times for a principalship in Washingtonville. His motive for seeking another job was professional advancement; when he left Colville after a year and a half as principal the school was, he felt, "in good shape." On January 1, 1975 Ellis Brown began work in the position of principal of Lincoln Acres Elementary School. He was 26 years old.

Brown looked a bit older than his years. The impression he tended to create in others was one of assurance. His usual manner was crisp, sometimes a bit aloof.

Brown's experiences in Colville fitted remarkably well with the demands of his new assignment: he was the first principal of a new open-space school, he had hired the faculty of the school, he had worked with parents in the community, and had taught in, as well as administered the school. Only the community contexts differed: Colville was a rural, nearly-poverty-stricken community, and Lincoln Acres was a new, affluent suburban community. So, on the hiring criterion of "relevant experience", the screening committee had done an admirable job.

B. Principal Recruitment as Seen by the Recruitee

Brown's reflections on the recruitment process, shortly after he arrived for work, are illuminating.

In general, he thought that the process took too long, with the result that the best candidates, because they were in demand, might have taken other positions while waiting for Washingtonville to decide. Including parents on the screening committee was, in his view a good idea, but not having other principals participate was a weakness. From his perspective, by the time the principal was to be hired the open space concept for the new school was a "fait accompli", because of the way it was constructed. He felt that some members of the screening committee, however, represented a conservative view and wanted less diversified curriculum and teaching methods while others favored the open space approach. It is worth quoting a portion of an interview with Brown ten days after he began work in Washingtonville:

> Researcher: How did the two viewpoints balance?
>
> Brown: They didn't strike any balance. I don't feel that either is legitimate. They don't know enough about education. They might change their point of view. The progressives are blindly attached to change with no foundation as to how it's done.
>
> Researcher: What about the conservatives?
>
> Brown: They patently don't know a damn thing about education. Yet they can possibly change. Both groups are opinionated and neither knows what they're talking about.
>
> Researcher: What about the administration's goals or visions?
>
> Brown: None. Bob Biddle is going to react to things that he likes or doesn't like. He gives the principals a huge amount of autonomy. Because of this he has some good and some strangely bad things in his schools. When they hired me they bought a product that fit their picture. This saved everyone involved from being explicit. They compromised. I have a free hand in what the school will become. I could keep everybody pleased, or I could please the community or Biddle. Nobody has ever defined the position clearly enough -- there is no accountability.

C. Brown's Early Vision for the School

These accounts of Brown's background as an educator and his impressions of the process by which he was recruited for his new position provide us with a perspective from which to consider his early plans for the school -- those he had upon arrival in Washingtonville. Below we review what he hoped to accomplish in his new position -- his goals for the new school, and his educational and administrative philosophies. Then we outline his strategy for planning and implementing these goals and philosophies.

1. Goals for the school

The overarching goals for Lincoln Acres school as Brown viewed them were:

> To be very adaptive. I really see openness in schools as openness to needs and opportunities. If we get somebody on the staff with abilities we can use them well. For example, in the past there was no art teacher but a third grade teacher did the whole school and others also used their abilities. Generally, not to follow any general prescription of what kids need -- idiosyncratic needs have to be identified.

Adaptiveness, openness and individualization, then, were the general goals. The structural arrangements Brown intended to accomplish this with were the use of the open space, team teaching, and multi-age grouping of students.

In relation to other schools in the district, Brown's aim was for Lincoln Acres to serve as a model: "I would like to become a 'lighthouse' school. People could borrow ideas."

2. Administrative philosophy

Central to Brown's administrative philosophy was his belief in a charismatic leadership style.20)

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20) The fact that Brown rarely stated his philosophy of administration illustrates a dilemma in fieldwork. He was never directly asked what his philosophy was, since we expected that the result would have been an idealistic, not a realistic answer. The statements that he did make about it were volunteered, often in another context, and therefore more likely to reflect what he actually believed in and attempted to do. (See the Appendix on Methods for elaboration.) There is still ambiguity, though: the fact that he seldom elaborated a philosophy may have meant either that he did not have a highly developed one, or that it simply wasn't important to him to let others know what he thought.

> People need to believe in the spirit of what is going on. I believe in a charismatic leader. Mechanics can crank out the same old things. I want people to take a chance. A principal's job is to lead people.

It is not entirely clear what meaning Brown attached to "charismatic leader", but presumably he meant someone whose personal qualities subordinates found so attractive that they granted authority because of those qualities, not because of the formal power of office.

Brown also wanted to maintain autonomy from the central administration. His view of the superintendent's administrative policy was that Biddle did grant substantial degrees of autonomy to building principals. In his view this freedom from tight administrative control could be used to aid the development of the new school's educational programs as the principal and staff desired.

Somewhat at odds with his preferred administrative style, however, was Brown's desire to have the faculty participate in making important decisions. During the initial stages, the mechanism for faculty decision-making was not explicitly stated, but Brown clearly implied that a way would be found for them to influence the goals and plans for the school. To a researcher, there was thus some tension between democratic norms on the one hand, and the demands of an inspiring, strong leader on the other.

Brown's intention to teach as well as administer, as he had in Colville, could be seen as a device to use this tension constructively. In Washingtonville, extra demands on his time, such as attending a weekly all-day principals' meeting, would be interfering with his being able to teach on a regular basis. He did succeed in doing so for a while, and we infer that he wanted to communicate his image of the principal's role as being that of an educational leader, rather than simply an "administrator".

3. Brown's educational philosophy

Individualization of instruction was the core of Brown's educational philosophy. The idiosyncratic needs of children, as noted above, were to be identified, and the instructional program developed around them. In Brown's view the most efficient means, but not the only one, to accomplish this was open education, carried out via team teaching. To a large extent, the architecture, Brown's background, and what the Screening Committee and Biddle were looking for, cast the school firmly in the mold of open space education with a staff arranged in teaching teams.

At these early stages "curriculum" was unspecified. Individualization seemed to imply that each child would have a curriculum shaped to his or her needs.

A few weeks after the faculty was selected, Brown was to distribute a short article to them which examined the philosophy of open education.[21] He drew a box around the following quote from John Dewey:

> There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clue in practice from that which it rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy (Experience and Education, p. 20).

Other passages in the text are also underlined. In all cases they caution against unexamined assumptions in open education, and the uncritical rejection of past practices. For example:

> Some kinds of structure and efficiency make the environment more comfortable and less frustrating for pupils as well as teachers. Structure or efficiency are not necessarily self-serving. (p. 282)

On the article, he also wrote a short message to the staff, part of which was, "The authors show obvious vision as to where we ought to go and what the common tasks are along the way."

4. Brown's plan for planning

In characterizing his strategy for innovation (meta-plan, in our terms), Brown emphasized that he was flexible and that he would do what the teachers thought they were capable of, instead of forcing innovations upon them. At one point he termed the strategy he would use "incremental," starting with the teachers -- where they were and working from that point toward more open education. Including teachers in decision-making, as we have seen, was part of the strategy.

The community, as already noted, had been involved in the early stages of planning, primarily in the bond issue and principal selection. Brown was aware of past community involvement and the eagerness of many parents to participate in planning the educational program for the school. His strategy toward parents was one that he struggled with in the early stages. Still uncertain how to treat them, he said:

> I'll be responsive to them, but I don't know what they can tell me. "Do we need their input for

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21) Czajkowski and King, The hidden curriculum and open education. Elementary School Journal: 75 (5): 279-83.

> making decisions?" The answer is clearly "No." "Do we need input for input's sake?" "Yes." I don't want to be bound by what they want us to do. I'm also concerned about having the community get a drop on the teachers -- goals should get worked out among teachers by themselves.

On the other hand, however, Brown viewed his largest problem as establishing the relationship of the school with the community and other schools in the district.

> I feel that we are being looked at a lot. I would not like to see the school go through a long period proving ourselves as in Colville. I hope that nobody gets worked up enough to start making noise in public.

Brown's plan for planning was a sketch, to be filled in as planning progressed. An essential feature of the plan was that Biddle, the superintendent, would allow for autonomy, Brown would permit teachers to have input, and the community, though not a welcome member of the group, was conceptualized as being able to influence the planning. (Indeed, they already had, through the selection of Brown.) The timetable included faculty meetings to take place during the spring, and a month of paid planning time for all teachers during the summer, which were to be used to fill in, and possibly alter, the existing rough design of the Lincoln Acres school.

To conclude this section, we make several brief comments on the meta-plan. First, the plan as formulated in the early stages of the enterprise reflected an incremental approach to the future. As we have seen, the plan was sketched on a general scheme or framework level, rather than including more details and substance; they would be decided on as planning progressed. Second, teachers, and possibly parents, would participate in the detailed phases of planning. Significantly, little or no use of outside experts was contemplated; planning would be the province of local educators.22) A third dimension of the meta-plan, then, was utilization of predominantly internal resources.

A fourth feature of the plan for planning was that operational linkage -- that is, continuity between planning and implementation -- was to be accomplished by having the eventual operators of the school do the planning. There was also the possibility (unclearly stated at this

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22) Our project's offer of "human systems" consulting help, which included a small amount of money on a matching basis, was rejected in favor of having the personnel who would eventually staff the school do the planning alone. Lack of money was not an issue.

time) that community members who had participated in the bond issue campaign and the principal selection process would participate, thus providing another source of continuity with the initial vision.

Fifth (although Brown did muse briefly to the researcher about the possibility of a community survey), the meta-plan contained no systematic way of collecting data from parents to steer the course of planning and early implementation. An associated point is, finally, that Brown's meta-plan was silent on the issue of how much change and adaptation could be expected in the plans and the developing school after it opened.

Overall, it seems fair to say that the two key administrators, the superintendent and the principal, were in fairly close agreement in their initial conception of what the educational programs of Lincoln Acres school should eventually become. They also agreed on the organizational design through which these should be reached. Of course, this agreement was not coincidental. Even though Biddle said he would not have selected Brown as his first choice for principal, he found Brown's approach to education acceptable and compatible with his own and voiced only a minor regret in having him as the principal. This regret did not reflect on Brown's abilities, but on what Biddle still regarded as the qualities of his preferred candidate that made her uniquely suitable -- in particular, her demonstrated ability to work with people. The fact that Brown was considerably younger and less experienced than Biddle probably increased Biddle's influence and thus the degree to which his vision was shared. The fact that Biddle was Brown's superior probably influenced the new principal's thinking to some extent.

One curious phenomenon, however, is that when Brown was asked about the administration's -- that is, Biddle's -- goals and visions for Lincoln Acres school, Brown said that there were "none". As we have seen, this was not the case; Biddle did have a vision for the school. It is possible, of course, that Biddle never indicated what his goals and visions were to Brown,* or if he did, Brown chose not to regard them as goals or a vision but only as an outline, not a set of objectives he was required to meet. But this does not seem to be entirely probable. While the reason for his denial of Biddle's vision is not clear from the data, a plausible explanation is that Brown was asserting his independence from, or lack of dependence on, Biddle for assistance in what the school would become. We shall have other occasions to see the same dynamic at work.

As the narrative progresses, we will return to the goals and visions for the school that various individuals and groups had formulated -- and to their revision and alteration as planning and implementation continued.

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* Biddle said that he did do so.

D. Teacher Recruitment

In the fall of 1974, Superintendent Biddle sent an announcement to all elementary teachers in the district explaining that if they were interested in transferring to Lincoln Acres school they should attend a meeting Ellis Brown was going to have soon. At the October meeting, Brown had briefly explained what he thought the school might be like and told the thirty teachers who attended that if they were interested in becoming part of the faculty they should write a letter of interest to the superintendent. Biddle also sent a reminder letter in mid-December. By the time Brown arrived in January to begin working full-time, twenty letters from teachers requesting transfer to Lincoln Acres had been received. Fourteen teachers, including a librarian and a resource teacher, were needed for the professional staff of the school.

1. Constraints

Three constraints affected the teacher selection process. The first was that all teachers had to be within-district transfers; teachers from outside of the district would not be considered.23) Enrollments was declining in the township, and many students who would eventually attend Lincoln Acres school would be transferred from a nearby school, resulting in a loss of teaching positions there. Biddle's policy of transferring stemmed from the contract, which specified that going outside was not possible if any already-employed teacher wanted the job.

This policy was also highly sensitive to teacher needs; the job market for elementary teachers was not good at the time. It was Brown's opinion in early January, however, that the staff "would be better if I could go outside to recruit."

The second constraint was that all transfers had to be voluntary. Under this condition Brown could not "actively" recruit teachers, nor could other principals actively seek to retain their teachers. According to Brown, these norms were broken by both sides in several instances.* The third constraint Biddle set was that staff should be hired for the new school by February 1, 1975, a month after Brown assumed the principalship.

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23) This constraint was relaxed in one case -- that of the media specialist.

* Biddle's retrospective view of the process was quite different. He said after reading this that the issue was, in effect, that all parties had to be satisfied (the teacher who applied for transfer, the "sending" and the "receiving" principal). He saw no barriers to active recruiting efforts, nor to efforts to retain teachers.

2. Criteria

The criteria Brown developed for selecting teachers, beyond their willingness to transfer voluntarily to Lincoln Acres, as reported by him in an interview, were:

(1) Experience at a particular grade level, yet equipped for a multitude of levels, for example, grades 1, 2, 3.

(2) Previous experience with team teaching.

(3) Previous experience in using the classroom in an open way -- establishing functional areas in the classroom.

(4) A teaching style allowing the students to develop independence and responsibility -- choosing what they want to do. A highly directive teacher is not desirable.

(5) A style that involves a lot of social interaction in the classroom.

(6) Experience in dealing with parents, especially parents who are critical of the school, and who have worked with parent volunteers.

(7) Indication that the individual is working with children in some socially constructive way as well as a simple, basic emotional response to kids. The kind of person who likes being around kids and has a nature view of what the business of the school is. Can't be juvenile -- must understand what the school ought to do.

(8) Good control tactics in the classroom. Not spending a lot time on control -- either because of interest or personality, the class is under control in a positive way.

(9) A familiarity with curriculum materials.

These nine characteristics used in selecting teachers provide further insight into Brown's educational philosophy -- and into how he intended to operationalize it. Multi-graded classes, team teaching, giving students independence and responsibility, socially constructive relationships between teacher and student and experience in dealing with parents fit into a general model of the school, which if still vague, is clearly different from the traditional one of isolated self-contained classrooms with thirty children and one teacher.

3. Methods

To select fourteen teachers from the pool of twenty, Brown visited their classrooms, talked with them informally and interviewed them in his temporary offices at the Board of Education. By January 10, 1975, he felt from his experience that some teachers whom he would have liked to motivate to come to the new school had received subtle hints from their principals that they wanted them to stay. He also detected from a half-dozen other teachers that they wanted to transfer to Lincoln Acres because they feared being fired from their present positions because of enrollment decreases in their schools and reasoned that if they became faculty members at the new school they would be less dispensable. He estimated to the researcher that "The staff will be very female, probably young -- not many old. More married than unmarried. No blacks probably -- there are only two in the pool and they are both marginal."

By January 16, 1975, Brown had identified two groups of three teachers in Fernwood School who wanted to come to Lincoln Acres as two teams. They had worked together in Fernwood to some extent but not in an open classroom and wanted to try team teaching at the new school. Brown felt that although the potential team members were already familiar with each other and had worked together he was not getting a "ready-made product" since they had a long way to develop before they could be called teaching teams.

In mid-January the resource teacher24) had also been identified. Imogene Miller and Sam Pennington had applied for the position. Miller, it will be recalled, had applied for the position of principal; she was Biddle's first choice, but was unacceptable to the parent members of the screening committee. Brown, aware that she had applied for the principalship, suggested to her that she would in effect be accepting a demotion be becoming the resource teacher, since she had already been one, and the position she currently held as coordinator of the high school work-study program had district-wide responsibilities. He also told her that if she seriously wanted a position as principal it would be wise to apply to other school districts in the vicinity.

Pennington, as we have seen, had been involved in planning the school at a variety of stages. He was young, friendly and energetic and had taught in Washingtonville for six years and was currently a member of a teaching team in the new open-space addition to Oxford School. Brown characterized Pennington as a "young Turk" in the district, and selected him to be the resource teacher.

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24) The basic responsibility of the resource teacher, a role not found in most school systems, is to facilitate teachers' realization of their instructional program. To some extent, the resource teacher aids the principal of the school in a similar way. Although the position sounds similar to a vice-principal role, it is not an administrative position, but a teaching position with school-wide responsibilities.

4. The faculty

By February 1, 1975 the selection of fifteen faculty members had been completed; and they were approved several weeks later by the Board of Education. It was a predominantly female staff, with only three males. As Brown initially expected, it was also a younger staff with only three middle-aged teachers; the others were in their late twenties and early thirties. All had taught for at least one year in Washingtonville and three had as much as ten or more years of experience in the district. The average teaching experience of all teachers was 5.5 years. Seven faculty members had tenure in Washingtonville and eight were non-tenured (like the principal). Eight faculty members had Bachelor's degrees and seven (like the principal) had Master's degrees (none had an earned doctorate). Eleven teachers received their training in colleges in the state. Only one teacher, the media center person, was hired from outside of the district. Specialists in fields such as art, physical education, music and the nurse were to be assigned by the district before the start of school in the fall. Chart 5.1 presents the staff listing as of February 1, 1975.

In spite of Brown's second criterion for teacher selection (that they should have had previous experience with team teaching), none of the teachers had actually team-taught before. One primary team, Priscilla Talbot, Wanda Molloy, and Dori Kraus, had classrooms close to each other in Fernwood School and had shared some materials and ideas. Similarly, the intermediate team of Bert White, Rebecca Barone and Glenda Jacobs also had classrooms close to each other in Fernwood School and shared materials but did not team teach. Katie Neustadt and Sally Candler taught in the same school and knew each other, but were not on the same floor and had not collaborated. The other teachers were all from different schools in the district.

5. Faculty expectations and experience

To help the reader understand the selection process and its results more clearly, we present data from two questions on the first extensive questionnaire administered to teachers on December 8, 1975. The first question gives us a retrospective glimpse into the motivation the teachers had for wanting to join the Lincoln Acres staff, and the second gives us at least a partial view of the teaching skills that they had used and brought to Lincoln Acres. We asked: "Why did you choose to come to teach at this school?" and provided several alternatives for checking. The results are shown in Table 5.1. The prospects of teaching in open space and of participating in a new, innovative school are clearly the two most important reasons. The write-ins emphasize the opportunity for team teaching, colleagueship and professional growth.

The second question we asked provided data on the teachers' past educational practice and thus the "fit" between their experiences and

CHART 5.1

INITIAL STAFF STRUCTURE OF LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL
(February 1, 1975)

Sarah Fox Alice Houghton (½ time) Louise Hargrove*	Kindergarten team
Priscilla Talbot Wanda Molloy Dori Kraus	Primary team -- grades 1,2,3
Sally Candler Jane Baylor Katie Neustadt	Primary team -- grades 1,2,3
Alan Beretta Jeanne Browne	Intermediate -- grades 4,5,6
Norbert White Rebecca Barone Glenda Jacobs	Intermediate -- grades 4,5,6
Regina Hanley	Media Center
Sam Pennington	Resource Teacher
Ellis Brown	Principal
Monica Selwin	Secretary

* Louise Hargrove was actually hired a month and one-half after the other teachers, because of increased enrollment in the kindergarten.

TABLE 5.1

REASONS GIVEN BY TEACHERS FOR COMING TO TEACH AT LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL

10	Open space aspects of school
2	Quality of students
5	School's physical site and location
14	Prospect of participating in a new, innovative school
8	Other (written in)
	(a) opportunity to learn professionally
	(b) the chance to work more closely with my team members
	(c) wanted to be full time
	(d) to team teach and grow professionally
	(e) team teach
	(f) teaming; multigrading
	(g) cut back in staffing at previous school -- when I was quite happy
	(h) the development of a close faculty feeling of trust and support among friends and professionals
	(i) to work with a team to maximize learning and personal growth

the role demands that they would probably face in their new positions. Teachers were asked if they had used a number of educational practices before coming to Lincoln Acres school (Table 5.2).

These data indicate that the teachers had previously used most of the techniques intended for the new school. We have noted above that no teachers had taught in a team; that eight indicated they had team taught is probably the result of definitional difficulties; at least six had shared resources and ideas with other teachers. The definition used in the questionnaire was: "An arrangement in which two or more teachers plan and execute together the instructional program for a number of pupils, generally in the same or adjoining rooms."

It can well be argued that these data, since they are retrospective judgments, are biased in some way. We did collect data from teachers on their hopes and expectations very soon after they were hired -- at the second faculty meeting, on February 19, 1975. Eleven questionnaires (including one from Ellis Brown) were returned. The results are described below.

1. "As briefly as possible, describe some of the aspects of being on the staff of the Lincoln Acres school that you are looking forward to."

   Of the eleven who answered this question, all mentioned some aspect of the staff as important. Five teachers mentioned improved learning opportunities for students, and four specifically mentioned working in teams. Other responses ranged from looking forward to working with a new principal to an opportunity for professional growth. Following are some representative responses:

   > Working in teams, help in developing a new school, renew my own zeal for helping students learn. Change for the better -- I hope.
   >
   > 1. Chance to help create a school without problems of a given structure.
   > 2. Opportunity to work with a staff with an esprit de corps.
   > 3. Chance to change jobs without going out of the L.A. area.
   > 4. Opportunity to work with Ellis Brown.
   >
   > I am looking forward to more of a sharing relationship with Norbert and Rebecca. Of the other people I know on the staff, I believe they have a great deal to offer colleagues and educators.
   >
   > Sharing parts of my life with a group of committed stimulated people -- sharing my life with children who are allowed to explore and discover their potentials and themselves.

TABLE 5.2

TEACHERS' PAST EXPERIENCE WITH EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES*

	Have you used it?		
	YES	?	NO
A. Independent study	13	0	3
B. Nongraded classes	10	0	6
C. Multigraded classes	12	0	4
D. Team teaching	8	1	6
E. Teacher aides	9	1	5
F. Programmed instruction	8	0	5
G. Flexible scheduling	12	0	3
H. Student record keeping system	11	0	5
I. Parental participation	16	0	0
J. Video tape	8	0	8
K. Outdoor education	12	0	4
L. Administrators performing classroom teaching	6	0	9
M. Computer	6	0	10

* Each practice was described briefly to provide a common definition.

It is striking how similar the responses were. Of course, the teachers were chosen because of their willingness to experiment with team teaching.

2. "What do you expect the new school to be like?"

   The most frequent answer (5) mentioned making education enjoyable, followed by flexibility (3), educational growth (2), and a community-like environment (2). One teacher was not sure what the school would be like. Some representative answers were:

   > I hope L.A. to have flexible scheduling, without any lock-step programming. The open space is conducive to a sense of community within and between the students and staff.
   >
   > A place where normal learning occurs, based on each child's needs, and increases optimally using all available resources.
   >
   > Lots of energy -- openness between kids-teachers, teacher-teacher, Prin-kids-teacher-community. Warm-accepting-intellectually alive-well structured-constructive, forward looking, open to changes-flexible.
   >
   > An educational utopia for students and instructors.

3. "Do you have any concerns or worries about what life will be like in the new school? If so, what are they?"

   For this question, answers were somewhat less homogeneous than for the two above. A kindergarten teacher whose class is self-contained was concerned with being cut off from the rest of the school, one teacher found the building ugly and without enough windows, a third was worried about the disruptive effects of noise and other possible distractions as a result of open-space. Three teachers voiced some concern over the parents and community. A typical response is:

   > Parental ignorance of education values.

   Three others expressed some concern with the actual operation of the school, or the related matter of adequate planning and preparation for the opening of school.

   > Team teaching offers a great challenge and demands understanding and cooperation among all involved. Problems may arise in coordinating, scheduling, and as in any new school, the first year may present problems of equipment, etc.

> I hope we have enough time to get our program planned out so that I can feel comfortable and confident in helping my students make the transition into the new program.

Finally, three people, including the principal, indicated that they had no worries or concerns. One teacher wrote:

> I have complete confidence in Ellis and Sam. I know that my concerns will be dealt with sensitively.

4. "Considering your own teaching, what would you like to do in the new school that you are not doing now?"

   The responses fell into three broadly-defined categories: team teaching (3), meeting student needs (6), and professional growth (4).

   Some examples of replies are:

   > Helping individuals more, be a little more creative. Receive more help in becoming a better teacher.
   >
   > Teach with a group of congenial teachers -- sharing the planning, teaching responsibilities and experiences. I hope for a more open and supportive administrator than my current boss.
   >
   > Be able to turn my full attention to a child or a group without worrying about supervising the rest of the class.

5. "As briefly as possible, describe what you would consider to be the ideal state of education taking place in the Lincoln Acres school five years from now."

   Again, several teachers gave multiple answers. Five indicated that individual instruction would be ideal, two wanted community and parental participation, four wished to see the environment of the school open and informal, and two had no answer. It should be mentioned that two teachers wrote "see number 2" which asked: "What do you expect the new school to be like?" Taken literally, and assuming that there was no misunderstanding of the question this seems to mean that they expected the school to open with its entire program operational.

   Representative answers to this question are:

   > After the model of British informal education I hope L.A. will become a lively, spontaneous place, where complete use is made of the physical plant and

> surrounding environment, where students actively are involved in their education, and all enjoy and are proud of being a part of this learning environment.
>
> I cannot make this kind of projection.
>
> Open enrollment with Lincoln Acres providing one alternative for parents and children to choose from. I hope it can be an "open space" informal education type school with considerable parent and community support and involvement.
>
> A resource of learning centers for students' interests -- to research and formulate ideas, with direction if needed from instructors. Education intrinsically motivated.

6. "How do you feel about being part of the planning committee for the Lincoln Acres school?"

   This question was answered by everyone that they felt that being part of the planning team was an important experience. Several mentioned that it created a sense of ownership of the school and that it gave them a sense of responsibility. For example, one teacher wrote:

   > I feel good because I feel that our ideas are really being listened to (usually).

7. "What personal or professional goals do you have that you hope to realize in the Lincoln Acres school?"

   The most frequently mentioned goal was to become a better, more effective, teacher and experience professional growth.

   > I hope to develop a better understanding of children and how they develop and learn by looking closely at them, growing with them in my ability to provide alternative educational experiences for them.

Several themes appear in the responses to the seven questions we asked in the early stages of planning. First, most teachers wanted the school to have individualized instruction. Second, they viewed team teaching as an appropriate means for achieving individualization of instruction. Along with this, they desired an informal organizational structure. Third, they stated a preference -- as one would expect -- for a social climate in the community and school that would be supportive of teacher and student efforts. A fourth theme is that the teachers wanted an opportunity for professional growth and anticipated it would occur as a result of their experiences in the new school. Finally, enthusiasm for the new undertaking is clearly evident.

These themes fit both Brown's and Biddle's early visions of the school rather well. In fact, there are no major differences between the administration and teachers in their expectations of what the school would be like, or in the major goals of the school. One major feature in both Biddle's and Brown's visions had been the idea that the faculty would build in the details of their general plans. Permeating the teachers' responses is a sense that they want and expect to have the opportunity to actively shape the programs of the new school. Thus, in this important aspect, there is substantial congruence between the administration's vision and the desires of the teachers.

E. Brown Meets the Community

During January, besides selecting the faculty, Brown worked on the district budget with the other principals, firmed up the Lincoln Acres budget, approved the installation of equipment in the otherwise empty school building, and began examining projected enrollment and staffing. Additionally, he performed miscellaneous tasks for Biddle, such as reading a proposal before it was submitted to the State Department of Education and interviewing candidates for a position that became unexpectedly available when federal funds were released. He also met with the community.

1. The LAHA meeting

During the first week in January Barbara Berger, the head of the LAHA education committee, met with Brown. She wanted to know what his plans for the school were, and if he would be willing to talk about them before the general membership of LAHA. Brown, whose ambivalent attitude toward community participation in planning has already been discussed, delayed making a commitment to speak with the homeowners' association. Reflecting on the request in a talk with the researcher, he said:

> In a mass meeting nothing useful would transpire. I might yet go door-to-door. I don't know what kind of relationship I want to initiate yet. I'm concerned about starting a dialogue too early. Sam Pennington and Bob Biddle have met with LAHA several times and I'll be guided by them in dealing with LAHA. LAHA raised hell with the builder and they asked about demountable partitions in the school. They want to close it up.

About a week and a half later Brown agreed to meet before the general membership of LAHA and other interested residents of Lincoln Acres on January 20, 1975.

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The LAHA meeting was held at 8:00 p.m. in a large multi-purpose room in a parochial school opposite the Lincoln Acres development. By 8:30, after the business meeting had ended and Berger was about to introduce Brown, there were approximately 275 people in the room, many of whom had to stand. They were predominantly young, fashionably dressed couples. With the exception of a few blacks and orientals, most were white. Pennington and several other teachers -- whose appointment had not yet been announced -- sat near the front of the room.

Barbara Berger introduced Ellis, saying that the community had waited a long time for the school to actually open. Brown then spoke for fifteen minutes about what he thought the school would try to accomplish with youngsters. He emphasized flexibility, individualization of instruction and the advantages of open space education over traditional, self-contained classrooms. In a crisp, strong voice, he then asked if the audience, which had listened in absolute silence, had any questions. Questions from the audience lasted for an hour and a half.

The questions were of three types: those dealing with operational aspects of the school; those concerned with the benefits of open education and its possible costs; and those concerned specifically with Brown and what he intended to do as the new principal. In all three of these areas, the questions ranged from asking for statements of fact to speculation about anticipated problems. Many questions were posed in terms of prior unsuccessful experiences children had had in open education schools, and wondered how the program to be put into Lincoln Acres would differ. Below are some representative questions and responses.

Operational aspects of the school:

Q: Will the school be equipped by September 1?
A: Yes, if the budget passes. We need support for it in numbers. I know that Lincoln Acres is for it but we have to make sure that the rest of Washingtonville is.

Q: What facilities will there be in the school, for example, a lunch program?
A: There will be hot lunches provided. [Several women were delighted by this.]

Q: Will there be bus service? -- We live far away from the school.
A: This is a Board matter.

Q: You indicated that you doubt that you will have full control in staffing. Do you think that you will have control of the school?
A: I think so. [From the back of the room a woman yelled in a harsh voice, "Don't count on it."]

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Q: Who is going to run the school, you or the superintendent?
A: I think I can handle it. I don't intend to be anybody's marionette. [Applause from about three-quarters of the audience followed this.]

Q: Concerning the removable partitions: would you have redesigned the school or do you accept it as is?
A: I probably would have made other recommendations. The walls are really not that movable. The building design was done before I came, it's all right as it is.

Benefits and possible costs of open education:

Q: What about noise in the building and openness?
A: Openness will probably create less noise -- people will have to consider others. I used to teach next to a shop room. All kinds of noise came out of it. I wished there was no wall between us, because if the shop teacher could have seen the pain he caused us, he would have been quieter.

Q: I don't want openness to fall on its face after six months -- are we ready for this?
A: Yes. I wish that I had pictures of my last school -- it worked well there. Of course, we'll have growth.

Q: When my child entered an open classroom from a regular one she developed troubles. After a long time of investigation we found that she couldn't handle so many different teachers. Now she's in a self-contained room doing well again. How would you handle a child like this?
A: We can create structure for this type of child and individual attention.

Q: Are you being too idealistic? Are you that committed to your system or can you have alternatives to begin with?
A: There have to be alternatives. You can't learn to swim by being thrown in the water. We will start with where people are and work from there.

Q: What about discipline in the open classroom -- won't there be more problems?
A: Discipline is better in open space. In closed classrooms the kid only has to get behind one teacher's back -- in open space he has to get out of sight of several teachers. [laughter]

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Questions about Ellis Brown as the new principal:

Q: How many years of actual teaching do you have?
A: I taught science in Vermont for two years. I worked in Boston part time in a special education program and I was a principal in New Hampshire, where I started the school.

Q: How long were you principal in New Hampshire?
A: One and a half years.

Q: Can we expect you to be here longer?
A: I plan to be here a while and I'm dedicated to educating the youngsters of Washingtonville.

Q: Do you plan to teach here as you did in New Hampshire?
A: This is a larger school and I'll have more administrative duties, but I plan to teach as much as possible.

Some of the answers Brown gave in each area sounded like policy statements, as did his responses to questions concerning the role of parents in the school.

Q: Can we choose teachers as we do in Fernwood School?
A: Yes, when feasible. It could be a problem if there is too large a selection of a particular teacher.

Q: Will we be able to see teachers in action and make a "value judgment" about them?
A: Yes, we will have an open school.

Q: How will you report student progress to parents?
A: I'm not sure yet. I would like to have comments from parents concerning what they would like to hear about, as well as input from teachers.

Q: Will you welcome parents into the school?
A: Yes. This was a selection criterion for teachers. We wanted those who have and could work with parents as volunteers in the classroom.

The meeting ended at 10:40 when the president of LAHA stood and said, "My knowledge of Lincoln Acres is that it is diverse. People hold a lot of different views, some for and some against. You'll get a hell of a lot of input, that's for sure." The same woman who had yelled from the back of the room "Don't count on it" in response to Ellis' answer that he would have full control of the school now yelled "You'll get hell." The somewhat startled audience gradually rose from their seats and began to leave.

Immediately after the meeting, Ellis reflected on what had transpired and concluded that it wasn't a "bad crowd." He thought that they asked naive questions and that they were easier to answer than the questions parents asked in New Hampshire; there they had made their questions personal and picked apart the principal's personality. According to Brown, the applause after the "marionette" answer was because "Biddle doesn't give the community its way, and is too direct with them -- poor public relations. They think they will get their way more with me, but they are mistaken."

Reactions to the meeting were less positive from other staff members' perspectives. Several Lincoln Acres teachers, for example, Alice Houghton and Sam Pennington, thought that the questions that Ellis was asked were highly personal and somewhat hostile. Barbara Berger, chairperson of the LAHA education committee which had invited Brown to speak, said of the meeting, a few days later:

> I was frankly embarrassed. The people gave him a hard time. Most people walked away with confidence in Ellis. Some were snide and sarcastic. Ellis handled himself well. But for example, take report cards. He said he would work with the community in making a report card. They now say that he doesn't even know what kind of report card he wants.

Charles Frisch, a member of the Board of Education, said of the meeting:

> When Ellis was at LAHA they asked some tough questions and he came through pretty well. It was my feeling that they thought "I may not like open education but I trust the man."

Considering that few community members had met with Brown previously and that the only other source of information was a brief article that appeared on the front page of the local newspaper that morning, outlining his career and new duties, the people who asked questions were fairly knowledgeable about open education, and fairly probing in their questioning of Brown's personal ability. The tone of the meeting varied from being intently serious to jovial, and on several occasions reached a threatening tone. What clearly emerged from this encounter was that the parents who attended had an active interest in finding out what type of education would take place in the new school. It also became evident during the evening that many of them had doubts that the proposed program for the school was suitable for what they viewed as their children's needs.

2. Parents at the synagogue

Eight days later, Brown appeared before a parent group at the local synagogue at the invitation of the rabbi. There were approximately thirty people present, including only one teacher, Sarah Fox, who was a member of the congregation.

After an introduction by the rabbi, Brown gave the same speech that he had delivered at the LAHA meeting. This was followed by questions. Again the questions dealt with problems that individual students might have, such as motivation and discipline. Other areas of concern were evaluation procedures and the general benefits of open education. Only one questioner, a Spanish teacher in another town, was highly skeptical; she doubted that students could learn "fundamentals" in the open classroom. One or two students present spoke in support of the experiences they had had in open education classes in Washingtonville. Generally, this audience was less openly challenging to most of what Brown said; they appeared more favorably inclined to try open education than the LAHA group. Brown's estimation of the meeting was that "They basically accepted what was being laid on them. This group was as ready to accept without rationale as LAHA is unwilling to accept *with* rationale."

F. The Board of Education Election, 1975

In late February, candidates for the March election to the Board of Education began campaigning throughout the township. Since its formation, LAHA had annually allowed the candidates to use one of their meetings as a platform for presenting views and answering citizen's questions. On March 5, 1975, one hundred and fifty residents attended the meeting, as did Brown, Anthony Smith (an assistant to Biddle), and Alice Houghton, a kindergarten teacher at Lincoln Acres school. Prior to the candidates' talks, the agenda contained LAHA business and a presentation by the local Jaycees. Sylvia Peabody, a school board member from Lincoln Acres, presented the school budget that would be voted on at the same time as the board election.

1. The candidates

A LAHA officer explained the rules governing the candidates' presentation, and the question session, and then introduced each one, who made a campaign speech. The first speaker was Barbara Berger. She emphasized her participation on the principal screening committee for the Lincoln Acres school, the fact that she would like to see the school board take a more active role in setting policy, and that she had time to devote to being a school board member. Her primary reason for wanting the position was that her child was entering the Lincoln Acres school in the fall.

Robert Klahr, a middle-aged stock broker from Allwood Green, made the next presentation. He talked about the need to watch the ways in which money was spent, and that the key concern of a Board member was "what happens to kids". He then talked about lack of communication between the people and their representatives, handed out a list of elected state officials, with phone numbers, and encouraged the audience to contact them if they had something to say about education.

The next candidate was Charles Frisch, a former superintendent of schools, and current director of the Right to Read program for the state. Frisch said that he and his family had moved to Washingtonville because the school system was good. He emphasized his background in education, and that as part of his job he works with Boards of Education throughout the state in implementing curriculum changes in reading programs. He also mentioned that he had been active in LAHA and for the last three months had been serving on the Board of Education as a replacement for a member who had resigned. Frisch lives in Lincoln Acres.

Following Frisch, Gerrie Holden, a resident of one of the rural areas of the township, stressed her previous activity in her children's schools and her work in writing a proposal for pre-school education. She said that she would represent the parents, and that parents should be listened to. In her view the Board of Education was a "management team" for the township.

The last candidate to speak was Dorothy Aiello from Allwood Green. She gave a rambling address as she wandered about the front of the room. Her main point was "Let's try to see if public school kids get as good an education as snobby elites."

After each candidate's talk there was applause: Frisch received the strongest applause and Aiello the least.

2. Issues and responses

When the candidates' presentations were finished, the audience was permitted to ask questions. Following are some of the exchanges; they indicate what some of the issues concerning the new school were, and how the potential Board of Education members responded to them.

> Q: Knowing about Barbara's views on open education, I'd like to know about others views and if we have enough support in the community for a variety of alternatives to open space.
>
> Moderator: I'd like to explain the situation to the candidates. We have a new school opening. Some parents don't like the open space concept and would like to know if they came to you what you would do about it.
>
> Klahr: My daughter was in an open-space class and learned a lot there. For her it was ideal but I can understand why it might not work in other cases. I don't know why some open space [programs] wouldn't work.

Q: You're not answering my question. You say you want input from parents--will you respond to it?

Klahr: If I felt you were right, I'd support it.

Karalis: Would you support Lincoln Acres if they asked for an alternative program in the school?

Klahr: I can't answer that. The Board doesn't run the school. We hire professionals to do it.

Holden: Yes. I would support you. The superintendent doesn't have a right to force anything on you. There should definitely be an alternative system.

Frisch: There is a more crucial issue. People hold onto terms like "open education," etc., but do you know where they are? It seems as though the open space schools that are successful have this structure.

When it first came down the pike I was worried, but when I heard the principal at LAHA I felt better. There should be an alternative in Lincoln Acres, but I hope that it won't become a trap. I feel that some people in the community are upset. If they came to the Board I would consider their requests.

Aiello: Open words in a small island. I would support you.

Frisch: I would like to say that we should give it time.

Berger: Go to Oxford or Eastland Junction and it is working nicely. Washingtonville trains teachers for open space, there are no problems in the other schools.

Q: How will you evaluate if the Washingtonville school School is meeting the needs of students and how long a period of time is needed?

Klahr: The answer to that is hard. If after a year people pound on my door I will look at it.

Frisch: The board will get a reading on where the kids are, including tests, check-sheets and teacher perceptions and attitudes toward education. The problem with innovation is that it improves the teacher/learner relationship and we tend to forget to teach the basics. The Board will have a procedure whereby they can have a readout on the state of things.

Berger: I'd like to see us give Lincoln Acres a fair chance. A year probably won't do.
Frisch: A year isn't really enough time. You need more time to make a judgement.

Other questions concerned the relationship the prospective board members expected to develop with the superintendent, what their position was with regard to the school budget and other far-ranging questions about various aspects of education in Washingtonville. All candidates answered that they would make policy and assume a role that would be to some extent independent of the superintendent. Only Holden was critical of the school budget and urged its defeat.

Essentially, the themes concerning Lincoln Acres school at this meeting were the same as those raised on previous public occasions. The basic concern, however, was over actions the candidates would take if elected: would they be responsive to the desire for "alternative"25) forms of education that many parents strongly wanted, or would they ignore them and continue the policies that Biddle preferred? The Board of Education was clearly viewed by many residents as a potential vehicle for direct action against the superintendent of schools in the event that he did not comply with their requests.

Brown's reactions. When Ellis spoke with the researcher after the meeting, his reactions to the candidates' presentations and the questioning were complex, but clear:

> I have a number of feelings: First, emotional -- how typical they are for people having a new school, they have all kinds of anxieties. Second, I give allowance for some of this, because they have been the object of a poor public relations campaign. Third, I'm sympathetic because the school has gone so slowly and given them time to speculate. I'll ultimately run my own kind of school anyhow. Whatever is decided in the political arena doesn't matter. They will come out with a school that I can run; I can run an exemplary school in an outhouse if necessary. I shouldn't get too hung up about politics. I will do things the most efficient way that the people want things done -- open education is an efficiency device. The dispute was about if I can deliver what is expected by the means I chose.

3. The Board election

The Washingtonville Courier endorsed candidates for the Board of Education for the first time that year. The editor recommended Dr. Charles Frisch as the first choice, writing:

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25) Note that the "alternative" rhetoric here refers to the presence of more traditional educational programs.

> Dr. Frisch is articulate, outspoken but cool and reasoned in his argument for a school system which links innovation with a sound knowledge of the basics -- reading, writing and 'rithmetic.
>
> Dr. Frisch is head of the state "Right to Read" program and brings with him experience as a teacher, principal, and state administrator. But he is not a passionate advocate of any single theory of education.
>
> He is open to public criticism and suggestion. He realizes in this day of inflation and with the inequities of our tax system, a school board member must curb his lust for new programs in favor of fiscal restraint. As one community leader described him: "He is the picture of the rational man."

In the district-wide campaign, there was no heated debate over any particular set of educational issues. In fact, aside from the development of the Lincoln Acres school, there were no issues, and for the most part the candidates agreed with each others' positions. The newspaper comments on the candidates seemed to acknowledge that there were few substantive reasons for choosing among them. Frisch was the only candidate with expertise in education; others had to be judged on the basis of their pledges to perform a public service.

In mid-March, Washingtonville Township elected Frisch to the Board of Education by the largest margin; he was followed by Holden and then Klahr. Berger came in fourth, and Aiello was a distant fifth. Lincoln Acres itself voted most heavily for Frisch and Berger, who were both residents of the development.

In the same balloting the $8.7 million budget was defeated. Approximately 250 more votes were cast this year than the previous year. Of the 1,677 who voted, 667 were for the budget and 921 were against it. In the rural areas, the vote was clearly against it: 10 people in Sawyer voted for it and 119 against; 4 for it and 157 against in Eastland Junction; 11 for and 116 against in Wright. With the exception of one suburban community, which defeated it by four votes, all the suburban areas of the township passed the budget by small margins. Lincoln Acres voted 158 for it and 141 against -- not an overwhelming mandate from people whose new home expenses probably left little room for payment of high property taxes.

The defeat of the school budget meant that the township council had to find ways to reduce it. After several weeks of work approximately $150,000 was eliminated. The concrete effect of this on Lincoln Acres school was minimal; it delayed materials ordering, and toward the end of the first year contributed to a shortage of paper products. But it was clear that Lincoln Acres school was being launched in a community with only a modest majority favoring the administration's budgetary proposals.

A few weeks later, the school board reorganized and elected a new president. Three members voted for Estelle Hunter, a resident of a rural community and former organizer of CLEAN. The other five (one was absent) supported Irena Farrell, who was re-elected school board president. Sylvia Peabody, a black from Lincoln Acres, Holden, and Hunter formed the losing, conservative, faction. In terms of representation from Lincoln Acres, Peabody was a conservative and Frisch was considered a moderate-liberal.

At about this time the Board adopted a policy of opening all meetings to the public. From now on, only matters that involved discussions of students, personnel, legal issues or real estate could be conducted at closed meetings of the Washingtonville Board of Education.

G. The Faculty Begins Work

Preparations for planning the school continued during this period. Brown investigated possibilities for faculty meetings before the summer, and drafted, with Pennington, a proposal for a month-long summer planning workshop. Brown was considering attempting an informal house-to-house open-ended survey in the spring, with the intent of getting a general feeling of the community. He also considered the research project's offer of matching funds for outside consultants to work with organizing the faculty. It should be mentioned that the only person working full-time on the preparations for the new school at this time was Ellis Brown, the principal. The teachers, media center person and resource teacher were all employed as teachers in other schools until the end of June. To avoid creating too many demands on the teachers, Brown decided to have faculty meetings relatively infrequently for the remainder of the school year and then meet daily for a month during the summer. Descriptions of the faculty meetings held during the spring of 1975 follow.

1. The first faculty meeting

In early February, before formal appointment by the Board of Education, the faculty had its first meeting, an informal gathering held at Ellis' apartment, a half-mile from the school in another township. Everyone was introduced, the Center for Policy Research study was explained,26) and there was a brief discussion of the idea of having a

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26) It will be recalled that the initial working agreement between our research project and the school district, approved by Biddle and Brown, specified that the project would be explained and reviewed with teachers when they were hired. Ellis did this at the first faculty meeting; the researcher was not present.

summer workshop for planning the program of the school. The teachers raised no objection to the idea of the research study, and their reaction to the idea of the summer workshop was highly favorable. After some refreshments, the faculty went to the school, and Ellis gave them a guided tour.

2. The second faculty meeting

The summer proposal is confirmed. Sam and Ellis prepared a preliminary version of the summer proposal, and it was presented to the faculty for reactions at the second meeting on February 19, 1975. Whether it would be funded or not by the Board of Education was an issue of some concern, as was student participation. Several questions were also asked about the wording of objectives which at points were not specific enough, several teachers felt. The major concern with the proposal, however, was with the role it described for parents, and with when parents would become involved directly with the school. The following excerpt from the field notes captures the tone of the first discussion the faculty had concerning the role of parents in the school:

> Regina: I have doubts about bringing in parents so soon (as part of the summer workshop).
> Ellis: So do I.
> Regina: We had the experience in opening a new school where we brought in parents too soon. We were not ready for them.
> Sarah: Do we need them a full week? (as proposed in the summer workshop schedule)
> Ellis: Maybe only one or two of us could work with them, or a team.
> Lisa: I don't think we can communicate with parents yet. They should be involved, but I don't see how yet.
> Sarah: What about taking a nucleus of parents from Fernwood, and have them train other L.A. parents? I'm sure that you won't have trouble finding them.
> Ellis: Part of the summer program is to let them see the school. Last night at the budget meeting, they asked if they could see it. Some have already seen it and commented to me. They want to see the facilities. Maybe we could have some language revision in the proposal -- we can make that decision later on.

Beyond these issues, there were no substantive suggestions for additions to or alterations of the proposal. Ellis, concluding the discussion of the proposal, said:

> What I've heard are really small changes. Is there somebody greatly disappointed? (No) Otherwise, I'll integrate the changes and cut down the length and that will be it. If there is something else let me know. O.K.?

The atmosphere of the meeting was informal and friendly. All of the teachers were eager and many participated in the discussion actively.

The first draft and the final version as submitted to and approved by Washingtonville Instructional Council[27] are nearly identical. The only changes are that the final version has a more extensive evaluation procedure, the phrases "consensual decisions" and "consensus-building" when discussing staff process are deleted, and there are minor additions. In spite of the fact that many teachers, and Ellis, had reservations about the inclusion of parents in the summer workshop, no changes in wording, or the actual activities parents would participate in were made in the final version. If anything, there were additional duties that parents would assume. For example, Charles Frisch, who was a parent along with being a Board member and reading expert, was to serve as an evaluator of reading checklists developed during the workshop. In fact, in a note from Ellis to the researcher, he said that objective eight, "student and parent educational decision-making roles," "may be expanded to parent and student involvements beginning earlier in the year."

The proposal's substance. Since the summer proposal is the major planning document that the leadership, Brown and Pennington, with the input and approval of the faculty, produced, it is worth examining fairly closely. Additionally, the summer proposal was the main linkage contemplated between the initial plans and implementation -- the actual structures and practices that would form the program of the school when it opened for students.

The objectives the proposal said would be reached by the end of the month-long summer workshop were:

1. written decision-making processes for each team and for whole-staff decisions;

2. team-member role descriptions, written by each team; librarian, principal and resource teacher roles, written by the whole staff;

3. written programmed series of basic skills objectives, Kindergarten through Grade 6;

4. physical division of space within the school, based upon educational rationale;

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27) In Washingtonville, proposals are submitted to the Instructional Council, which is composed of volunteer teachers from throughout the district. After their approval, which is usually pro forma, the proposal is recommended to the Board of Education for funding. The amount requested for the Lincoln Acres School Summer Workshop proposal was $17,000.

5. circulation of basic skills learning strategies, centralized through the library/resource center;
6. written student needs assessment systems;
7. written program effectiveness evaluation systems;
8. student and parent educational decision-making roles.

These were to be achieved in the order in which they are presented, at the rate of two during each week of the workshop. Objective #3 was begun during the faculty meetings preceding the workshop, since it was expected to require more than a half-week's work. Accomplishment of objective #4, Brown pointed out, depended on deliveries of furniture and materials to the school.

The document also provides a glimpse of the type of relationships that Brown hoped would develop among the faculty. Teaching teams, the basic unit of the school, are formulated as operating together in making decisions ranging from the way in which furniture would be arranged to the curriculum to be used. Brown, Pennington and Regina Hanley, the media person, are viewed in the proposal as being facilitators for the teams; they are not superordinate administrators, but rather resource people, of equal status with the teachers. In fact, the language of the proposal is that

> ...the librarian, resource teacher and principal see a need to develop descriptions of their roles through interaction with staff that will break from traditional interpretations of those titles.

Concerning decision-making, in most instances it is proposed that the teams would formulate their own policy. However, in several areas, for example, the role of parents in the school and the use of checklists, decisions and procedures would have to be school-wide.

In general, the model is one of decentralization of tasks and decision-making to the level of individual teaching teams. Indeed, the lack of positions -- vice-principal, team leaders, departments heads -- reduced the possibility of creating a well-defined hierarchy of authority with power delimited by position, and centralized in the principal's office.

In addition to making statements on the desired organizational structure and interpersonal relations within the school, the summer proposal is fairly explicit about the kinds of relationships that Brown would like the school to develop with its environment: parents and other schools. Parents were to be given the opportunity to react to the plans made by the teachers, as well as to be included in the final week of the workshop, where they would collaborate on a report card, begin the parent aide programs and design community use of the school.

A general objective underlying the eight described above was that of creating a "personal sense of ownership" in those involved with the school; the proposal emphasizes the importance of joint planning, and states that

> ...the obvious alternatives of patterning the school after some other school, modeling it after some theoretical structure, or shaping it according to some administrator's or consultant's thinking were rejected.

Independence of autonomy, as we have already noted, is evident. This passage also implicitly reiterates the theme of reliance on internal resources and talent.

Lastly, the proposal concludes with the intention of having Lincoln Acres school and its staff become models and resources for the rest of the elementary schools in the district.

> Students and parents of Washingtonville will be provided with a unique new educational setting by the end of the summer's program. Processes of decision making, checklist writing, student needs assessing, program evaluating and team-teaching in open schools will be available as process models to other schools in this district. This is an especially important contribution to a district committed to development of open and informal learning systems. Lincoln Acres School staff will be available to collaborate with other schools' staff developing parallel programs.

(Comments.) Generally, the proposal is fairly straightforward, and seems to cover most areas important for the opening of a new school that might be accomplished in the space of a month. Indeed, if there is a basic problem with the proposal, it is that it presents too ambitious a plan for the amount of time available, even though work on several objectives (deciding on furniture, developing some objective lists, and starting team development) was to begin in the spring faculty meetings.

A related comment is that the proposal presents planning as a rationalistic process that moves in a straight line from faculty selection to a smoothly functioning school. No contingency plans are mentioned, and no criteria are stated for minimum acceptable achievement of goals. This optimistic projection of task completion may have been an artifact of proposal writing style, which usually aims to impress the funding agency that the enterprise is worthy, and is not an expression of what the writers think will actually occur. But in this case the audience was more "internal" than usual, and doubt concerning the proposal being funded was not strong. That the faculty needed time to organize the school was not questioned by anyone in the district. A plausible explanation of the optimism and rationality is that the new school -- especially the new principal -- had to present a formidable, even dynamic, public image to secure its place in the school system. This is all the more likely since Lincoln Acres school was viewed throughout the district as being innovative.

This raises the problem of understanding educational rhetoric that we have encountered earlier: one issue involves procedures for data analysis, and another is epistemological. Given the fact that educators -- as well as members of other professions -- often make goal statements that are idealistic and far outrun anyone's ability to achieve them, is it fair to be critical about "implementation failure"? From a methodological point of view, we think it is not: simple comparison of later achievements with ideally-stated goals is insufficient. A careful analysis will need to look for reasons why hyperbolic goal statements are made in the first place, and how more reasonable ones are substituted as work proceeds.

The epistemological or theory of knowledge question involved here is: can we say that the researcher is in a better positon than his subjects to make judgements upon what is "rhetoric" (and thus unachievable) and what is not? This issue has been frequently debated during the history of the social sciences, and we will not elaborate the debate here. We will try to point to the possibility that some goals may be rhetorical, as in this case, but resist taking the position that "we know better," even with the advantage of hindsight.

Other issues. At this meeting, the faculty also discussed the budget for the school, ordering of materials, and furniture design and delivery. They also raised other operational questions: whether there would be a lunch program, and whether it was possible to get special equipment for the kindergarten and developmental gym.

During the discussion of these questions the issue of the role of the resource teacher was raised, when someone wanted to know if Sam could help with ordering materials.

> Wanda: Is that your role, Sam, or not?
>
> Sam: It's not defined yet -- that is part of the summer proposal. There is a language problem in using both "resource center" and "resource teacher". Don't lock me into a resource room -- I plan to be around the school.

At another point Priscilla Talbot raised the question of whether they were planning for "informal education" (in the British sense). Ellis did not respond directly, but said "It's too bad that we have to order materials now. We don't know each other's educational views yet. The calendar causes this bind. Try to feel each other out and order stuff that gives you a sense of [fitting your] style."

Regina described the program in the media center. She enumerated the instructional materials that would be available to teachers and explained the ordering procedure needed to borrow films from the county library. After this, the meeting ended.

3. The third faculty meeting

Three weeks later, the third faculty meeting was held at the Board of Education offices, after school had finished for the day. Before the meeting formally began, a book salesman made a presentation to those teachers who were interested. Other instructional materials were passed around for teachers to look at and comment on, and arrangements were made for meetings with other publishers' representatives.

The main topic of the meeting was furniture for the school, including teaching stations, bookcases, closets -- items other than chairs and tables. On a cardboard display Ellis presented drawings of the furniture that had been suggested by Sam Pennington and other teacher members of the original design-input committee formed by Biddle. He explained the purpose of each piece, and teachers gave suggestions about variations (such as whether or not they should have wheels, and whether they should have peg-board or blackboards on the backs). The arrangement was that after further suggestions and revision of the basic models presented today, the furniture would be built by Washingtonville maintenance workers in the quantities requested by teachers.

Brown also announced that he would soon have a mock-up of the floor plan of the teaching space prepared; it would allow each team to move the furniture around; they could experiment and discover what organization of furniture and space they preferred. The meeting then shifted to a warehouse about 100 feet from the Board offices in which the furniture was stored.

In the warehouse, Bob Haines, head of the maintenance department, explained the intended use of each piece of furniture and modification of the original designs that he had made in the process of construction. The focus of attention became diffuse after a short time, with teachers commenting among themselves. Eventually several teachers asked Haines why he had made the changes, which to them decreased the usefulness of the pieces involved. Pennington also became involved, saying to Haines, for instance, "A couple of teachers say that this is too deep." Haines did not respond. Throughout this there were side comments by the teachers that they did not think that the furniture was designed or built as well as it could have been. Shortly after, Biddle came into the warehouse, ostensibly looking for Haines, but pulled Ellis to the side and privately told him that going over the properties of the furniture was not a productive process. The only way to revise the furniture meaningfully, in Biddle's view, would be to have some teachers use it. He suggested that the furniture should be sent over to Oxford school for tryout there. Biddle then left the warehouse. After more criticism of the design, rationale for various changes ("There can't be pull-out drawners, because it would tip over too easily then.") and unfocused discussion by teachers, Brown shepherded everyone out of the warehouse back to the Board offices by saying "Well, we've seen enough. It's 4:30, we've got things to do." Haines, who defended his design changes on the basis of safety, said to a couple of teachers who were on their way back to the meeting, "Well, I can't make each one different."

Later in the meeting, Brown commented on the "ownership" that Haines had developed for the furniture that he had built. He then commented on several features of the furniture that he disliked, and cut Sam short when he was reiterating that Haines had changed the designs, by saying "It doesn't matter who designed it or what it looks like now. If it doesn't look useful, say what would be useful." Furniture is a topic that we will return to shortly; it became part of the debate over what the educational program of the school should be.

This incident also exemplified an aspect of Brown's personal style: along with the air of aloofness we have mentioned, he could be brusque, even curt, when crossed or annoyed. To Ellis, Sam's apparent wish to defend the "original" design seemed simply irrelevant to the immediate task, judging from his abrupt comment.

The next agenda item concerned use of the April 17 staff development day. The main issue was whether it should be used by the new faculty or, if teachers preferred, for participating with the schools in which they presently taught. Brown emphasized that he did not want to place teachers in a position that would result in conflict with their present schools. There was more discussion and explanation of what was planned for that day at other schools, and what problems, if any, would be caused by missing those activities. No decision was reached, and the topic was left with Brown's promise to get more information from David Hauptmann, the principal of Fernwood, on what plans could be made for that day with the Lincoln Acres staff that would not interfere with his program.

The meeting concluded with a preliminary discussion of student placement for the next year. The main issue was whether the procedure used in Fernwood school in previous years, which gave parents an opportunity to request teachers, would be suitable for Lincoln Acres school. Brown said that the issue was wide open, and that it should be thought about and would be discussed at the next meeting. He then checked with teachers on the status of their materials ordering forms and suggested that they have them completed and to the secretary soon because the district deadline was approaching.

Finally, Sam made some short announcements about learning materials that would be available for teachers to inspect. The meeting ended with an unsuccessful attempt to find a next meeting time at which everyone could be present. After some discussion, Sarah Fox suggested that the group meet at different open space schools. But no decision on a day to

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meet could be reached; Ellis said he would work on finding a suitable date. He then repeated that by the next meeting teams should look at the mock-up of the floor plan, and that everyone should consider student placement procedures.

Ellis' view of the teams. On the day after this meeting, Brown commented to the researcher on the way he saw the teams developing. According to him, Glenda, Rebecca and Norbert (one of the intermediate teams) were working hard at building a group; they were making "a conscious attempt at building a human system"; this group was taking more tire getting ordering done than the other groups but was otherwise, he felt, doing fine. In Brown's opinion the other groups were more task-oriented: as far as their development into a team they would have "natural development." It was Brown's view that:

> There is a great deal of knowledge being revealed by their preferences; this shakes out their values. This was my intention: to give them tasks and in the process [they would] get to know each other. To create opportunities for team building, to happen at natural development points.

Specifically, he thought that Sarah and Alice (kindergarten) knew their differences and took an intellectual approach to resolving them. Alan and Jeanne (from the other intermediate team) were "accommodating people" as were Wanda, Priscilla and Dori (one of the primary teams); he thought both teams would experience natural development. The other primary team, Jane, Sally and Katie, got along easily with each other, but Brown reflected, "I don't know how profoundly together they are."

Generally, he seemed to be satisfied with the initial progress made toward forming a faculty.

4. The fourth faculty meeting

One week later, on March 18, 1975, the fourth faculty meeting was held in the recently-completed open space addition to Eastland Junction school. The teaching area of the addition -- which the teachers inspected informally but closely -- had well-defined "classroom" spaces. Several wall-to-ceiling partitions, and the arrangement of bookcases and other furniture created a sense of isolation between instructional areas, as in self-contained classrooms. The main positive aspect of the building was its flexibility. For example, most furniture was on wheels, the floor was entirely carpeted, and the walls were demountable, though not easily moved. Most Lincoln Acres staff members felt that the arrangement of furniture and walls reduced the openness of the space; they were unable to see the point of "open space" used in such a way. Alan, Sally and Sarah said they were particularly puzzled by what the benefits of open-space were when it was used this way. At one point in the meeting, Brown asked if it would be useful to continue to meet in Eastland

Junction so they could "poke around" in the open space, or in Oxford school. Jeanne asked, "Is it like this, or is it open?"

Once the group assembled, the first topic of the meeting was parental requests for placement of children in classes. The issue, as introduced in the last faculty meeting, was whether or not the same procedure used for parental requests by David Hauptmann, principal of Fernwood school, should be adopted at Lincoln Acres. The general staff reaction, including that of the teachers currently working in Fernwood, was that parental preference should be eliminated, because it might result in a variety of unnecessary problems. Furthermore, it was agreed that "most parents actually don't have a concern with where their children are placed", and that only a "vocal minority" do. But it was the vocal minority that could present a potential problem.

This conclusion led to a discussion of appropriate methods for informing parents of their children's assignment to teachers, and when they should be notified. At first Brown said this would be done in the spring when Fernwood re-assigned its population, but after discussion the group concluded that it would be better to wait and make student placements during the summer workshop. They feared that having parents make replacement requests would set a precedent, and give them too much power. The following exchange illustrates this, and Brown's comment on his strategy for handling parents:

> Sally: We want to develop certain attitudes at the beginning in the parents. At Wright school certain parents want to run the school. We have to draw a fine line where the parents are concerned. How are we going to handle parents?
>
> Brown: That's my political genius. If a parent comes in and says she wants a teacher with certain characteristics, I just say, "That's wonderful, that's just the kind of teacher she has." I can go through that routine asleep.28)

A second, more subtle, apprehension made the issue of teacher selection important; teachers were afraid they wouldn't be selected by parents, casting doubt on their ability as teachers. Norbert White, who wanted the practice of parental preference discontinued, had in previous years

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28) Ellis liked acting in amateur theater productions. His avocational interest was not wholly disconnected from his performance as a principal; there was sometimes the feeling that he was putting on an act for parents, the Board, or other audiences. Here he seemed to be acknowledging this directly.

enjoyed waiting lists of parents who wanted their children in his class. Others on the faculty had also developed reputations in the district as being exemplary teachers and had what amounted to a devoted following. Several teachers, however, because of their recent arrival in Washingtonville, had not had the opportunity to develop a reputation -- or perhaps weren't deserving of one. At any rate, the underlying feeling was not only that parental selection of teachers would possibly create a channel for parental power, but that in terms of the status system of the school, parental requests could potentially differentiate highly esteemed from non-esteemed teachers.

Following this discussion, Brown reported that he had made arrangements with David Hauptmann about the April 17 instructional development day. Ordinarily, the Fernwood teachers who had joined the Lincoln Acres faculty would have had to participate with the Fernwood faculty in developing school-wide projects, but Hauptmann agreed to release them so a Lincoln Acres all-day faculty meeting could be held. Everyone was pleased.

Regina Hanley, the librarian, who was a long-time resident of Allwood Green, had suggested privately to Ellis that the faculty have a meal at her house after the meeting. He reported this, people liked the idea, and several offers were made to help Regina with the preparations.

Ellis then announced that the superintendent was going to close all budget accounts soon, creating a deadline for ordering materials. He emphasized that "I'm going to try to operate from here on and forever more without arbitrary deadlines -- but in this case we need the money." A short discussion of the technicalities of ordering materials (for instance, the price of a ream of paper) followed. When it was over, furniture, which had been the primary focus of the last meeting, again became the topic of conversation.

Several teachers had complained earlier to Ellis about Bob Haines' redesign for the furniture. At this meeting, Brown said that he had talked with Biddle about the problem and that it had been "hammered out." He added that he saw no reason why the furniture couldn't have wheels and drawers as originally planned, since he had had no problems with that type of furniture in New Hampshire. Then, with the models of the furniture on display, the faculty led by Ellis, proposed ways of altering the designs, and discussed which teams wanted particular pieces of furniture.

In response to suggestions for change, Brown explained the limitations imposed on them and suggested that in some cases changes might be too late because certain pieces of furniture might already have been built. He then said in what amounted to a shift from his early position:

> I was thinking about the furniture we saw the other day. Why bother with the way it got that way? I

> thought back to New Hampshire, which was more open than Lincoln Acres. The only furniture we had was some bookshelves, blackboards, teaching stations and some standing cabinets. There was nothing else there. We had none of this mess center, teaching center, game center, etc. All of the furniture was the same. One reason for being general is that if they are too specific you might want to change them and not be able to. I can tell Haines to make nine different pieces from what we have here. I would urge you to think in terms of general utility and not the specific pieces up here.

The placement of coat racks, cubbies (storage spaces for student possessions), and bookcases was then discussed in some detail. Following this, Brown distributed a diagram of the floor plan of the school to each team. With the exception of the suggestion that quiet study areas should be planned away from noisy equipment (such as a typewriter, a duplicating machine and a computer terminal in the media center) Ellis said that teachers should plan the spaces as they wanted to. Wanda asked if there would be dividers between spaces. Brown replied:

> Don't feel badly about dividers. I should say something about that. For example, look at that wall -- it doesn't set [activities] off acoustically and yet they [teachers] can't help each other either. Don't design it more open than what you are ready for. You may find that you want to change it later on. What is important is that the kids learn, not how it looks.

When the meeting ended, the teachers remained and several discussed furniture placement. Others planned to meet the following day at the school. Alice and Sarah, the kindergarten teachers, asked Ellis if he would meet with them in a few days at Sarah's Allwood Green home to discuss furniture ordering for the kindergarten. In many cases, arrangements were made to continue materials ordering, and furniture design and placement planning outside of the formal faculty meetings. Several teams had been meeting on their own time since the faculty was selected.

(Comment.) This faculty meeting, as well as the ones that preceded it, was relatively informal, especially considering the tensions that usually accompany the beginning of new social relationships in work situations. Although Ellis tended to be the center of attention, the faculty was consulted on all major decisions; most teachers had sufficient opportunity to express their opinions. Of course, as in almost all human groups, several teachers sat without offering any comments on the proceedings.

In these early meetings, collegial relationships began developing among the faculty. For example, Ellis made it known in the second faculty meeting that he preferred to be identified by his first name. Several teachers commented on how unusual it was to call a principal by his first name; principals they had worked with for many years still expected to be called "Mr. So-and-So." Sarah commented, "I would never think to call Mr. Silver, Joe!"

We should also note here that the central administration encouraged this kind of informality among faculty members. Biddle, the superintendent, appears to have known every teacher by name -- as well as knowing a fair amount about their personal lives. Teachers' relationships with Biddle were in many cases equally informal and personal. It was not unusual to hear a teacher yell, "Hey, Bob Biddle, how ya' doin'?"; this would begin a conversation that might range from discussion of the weather to the problems of children with perceptual handicaps.

Relationships among teachers were naturally informal and becoming closer; teams were spending more and more time planning together, often at one team member's home. The teams had begun to have labels. For example, someone dubbed the primary team of Jane Baylor, Katie Neustadt, and Sally Candler "NBC" using their last initials. This idea spread, so that everyone began referring to teams this way, except in the case of the kindergarten. The MTK team was the primary team of Wanda Molloy, Priscilla Talbot, and Doris Kraus; the BJW team was the intermediate team of Norbert White, Rebecca Barone and Glenda Jacobs; and the BB team (intermediate) included Alan Beretta and Jeanne Browne.

During this period while the faculty was meeting in preparation for opening the new school, members of the community began active opposition to certain aspects of the plans. We now turn to these concerns.

H. Community Concerns

While the school was in the final stages of construction, a group of Lincoln Acres parents, whose children were scheduled to enter kindergarten when the school opened, requested that the superintendent implement an academic program rather than a developmental program. They also requested an enclosed teaching space for the kindergarten. Biddle acceded to the latter; the kindergarten area was separated by a moveable partition from the rest of the instructional area.

During the remainder of the construction, parents, for the most part members of LAHA, monitored the progress of the building. In the spring of 1974 -- the school had originally been scheduled to open in the fall of 1974 -- they discovered that demountable partitions, delivered to Lincoln Acres school for use there, had been sent to, and installed, in the new open space addition at Oxford school. They became anxious over the possibility that the partitions would not be replaced -- thus eliminating the "alternative educational program" that had been presented in the bond issue literature. As with other issues, this concern was brought to the attention of the Board of Education. As a result, in the early summer of 1974, parents received a promise from Biddle that some type of partitions would be used in the school.

By the time Brown arrived in January, 1975, and serious planning of the educational program had begun, demountable partitions for the new school had still not arrived. Indeed, as we have seen, the educational program intended for the school as Brown described it at community meetings, although using furniture for partitions, was entirely open space with the exception of the kindergarten area. The result was reactivation of community concern.

In early March, Barbara Collins, a resident of Lincoln Acres, began circulating a petition throughout the neighborhood; it called for one classroom -- with four walls -- for each grade level in the school. In Collins' words, she wanted "A traditional classroom which stresses the basics and discipline."

On April 14, 1975, at a Board of Education meeting Collins presented the petition, signed by 153 residents of Lincoln Acres. The argument of the signers was that open education was not the best form of education for all children, that other schools in the township had "traditional" classrooms as well as open classrooms, and -- finally -- that the alternative forms of education which had been provided for in the bond issue were no longer being honored.

At the Board meeting, Brown stated that decisions on where partitions would be placed and what kind of classrooms would be conducted were not yet final. Privately, Brown felt that the petition was an attempt to "bring the superintendent to heel. School Board members want to make decisions -- reassert their role." He continued by saying "This is not my decision at all. I don't want any part of it. We could set up pup tents at Crown Point and still have a good school. They know that." He also mentioned that he had met with a representative of the group that had petitioned the Board; he and others told Brown they were pleased with his performance, and with the staff.

LAHA's resolution. Before she presented the petition to the Board of Education, Collins sought additional support for it from LAHA. After deliberation LAHA's executive committee declined because the wording was too strong; they decided to write their own resolution and present it to the Board. The LAHA resolution, prepared in early April, read:

> The Lincoln Acres Homeowners Association believes that there is no one best way for all people to learn or all people to teach. Therefore, we want provisions and options available in the Lincoln Acres School. Effective as of September 1975, we want to see alternative education on every grade level, for example, self-contained classrooms.

The difference between this resolution and the Collins petition is that while it asks for alternatives on every grade level, it suggests self-contained classrooms as an alternative and does not demand them. The LAHA resolution was not presented to the general membership and approved until May 8, 1975; it was not presented to the Board of Education until June 2, 1975.

Ethnic group concerns. One sub-group in the community, the relatively large Chinese population, also had doubts about the school, but for the most part did not seek changes aggressively.[29] Two years prior to now, when LAHA sent out its questionnaire, the leader of the Chinese sub-community contacted Michael Karalis, then LAHA president, and explained that many Chinese parents felt that open education did not complement the traditional discipline of their families. Once Brown arrived, they also quietly conveyed their concerns to him; they spoke to teachers as well when the opportunity came in May at the Parent-Teacher Night at Oxford school.

The Indian population, although it was often represented at public meetings, did not appear to be upset with the plans for the school -- or at least did not join the public protests. While many Indian women in the community retained their traditional apparel and an Indian restaurant opened on the highway bordering Lincoln Acres, no formal Indian educational programs were begun.

I. The Instructional Development Day

The Lincoln Acres faculty met all day as planned on April 17, 1975, in Fernwood school, primarily to write mathematics objectives. Norbert began the meeting with a brief announcement about recent activities of the Washingtonville Education Association (WEA), the local teacher union, and asked if anyone would be willing to be the Lincoln Acres representative to it. There were no volunteers. The discussion of WEA activities continued for a while, then the focus gradually shifted to recent inquiries from parents about the new school:

> Doris Kraus: We're having parent conferences now and some of mine were bad, the parents don't understand much about Lincoln Acres. Is there some way we can have open house for Lincoln Acres parents?
>
> Ellis: I don't want to take away time from Sam but I have arranged with Joe Silver to have a meeting for Lincoln Acres on the evening of May 7. The staff

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29) Local residents did initiate a weekly after-school Chinese language and cultural program, enrolling about three fourths of the Lincoln Acres Chinese students.

will be presented and the format will be to have you talk about why you are going to Lincoln Acres, and then break into small groups for questions and answers.

Norbert: Oh! That's for the bulls! The mass meeting at the Board was chaotic last week. At LAHA it was a good mass meeting, but a lot of information didn't get across.

Ellis: The suspicion is that people really don't want to work at Lincoln Acres. They don't think you went there with free choice. This meeting will be an introduction and not much more.

Norbert: Don't have it in Lincoln Acres. It's too open and hard to imagine what it will be like. It's better in Oxford. And don't let us get chewed out in a corner by individual parents.

Ellis: We'll have a meeting to prepare before-hand.

Attention then turned to writing mathematics objectives. Sam explained that the statement should be of the specificity of "the students will be able to add a column of three numbers", not "the students will be able to add." He then instructed the faculty to meet with members of their grade levels and "brainstorm" objectives without worrying about the form; Ellis and he would standardize the language and put the objectives into a systematic format.30)

Intermediate teachers formed one large group, while the two primary teams, along with the kindergarten teachers, met separately. One primary group, Sally, Jane and Katie, more or less decided to adopt a list of objectives from a Title III program that they liked. The other primary group, Priscilla, Elaine, Alice, and Wanda, divided up basic skill areas in mathematics (subtraction, multiplication, division and addition), then went through various textbooks and compiled lists. The

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30) The list of mathematics objectives finally appeared on a record form three weeks later. Some examples are:

> Given two single digit numbers, the student will correctly add them without using any physical aids.
>
> Given a three digit number, the student will correctly identify the place value for each digit.

Objectives of similar specificity would eventually be developed for reading and language arts.

intermediate group, after some discussion, used a variety of sources to fashion their list which, unlike those of the other teams, was not finished by the end of the session.

At a predesignated time, the group reformed and reported what had been accomplished. Beyond a brief report on the degree to which the task had been completed, the only comment was a question by Priscilla concerning the use of the computer to monitor student progress in reaching the objectives. She feared that narrowly-defined and rigorously-monitored objectives would defeat their educational purposes. Ellis explained that to him the computer was a technocratic convenience and that it would enable them to have a single set of objectives for the entire school and a common language for describing the students.

Objective-writing, which began in this meeting, would resume in the summer. It was an important activity: essentially, it was the mechanism through which the faculty formulated a curriculum for the school. The objectives also formed the basis upon which teachers would evaluate the progress students made, and meeting objectives eventually became one of the criteria upon which teachers would be evaluated by both the school administration and members of the community.

When the discussion on objective-writing was finished, Sam suggested that the faculty create a "yellow pages" of teacher skills to form a resource booklet for the entire school. He distributed mimeographed sheets with places to write any skills, talents or interests that teachers had and were willing to share.

Glenda then noted that in her opinion there were still problems with communication in the group. As an example, she pointed out that until this meeting several people had not known the names of everyone on the faculty. She then suggested that the group have a communications workshop for a weekend at Rolling Ridge, an outdoor education site frequently used by the Board of Education, so that the faculty could get to know each other better. Other teachers liked the idea, but at least one thought it would be difficult to take an entire weekend. Sam suggested making it one day, which was thought to be acceptable as long as it was held somewhere away from the school setting. Ellis asked the group if this was the type of activity they would like to have as part of the summer workshop. There was little response, except from Sam, who said that he too was concerned with the issue Glenda had raised; he suggested that the group might want to start work on interpersonal communication the next faculty meeting. The response to this idea was vague. However, Sally suggested that the process of becoming more familiar with each other would probably begin that night at the party at Regina's house. For the time being, this suggestion was left without action.

Next, Ellis reminded the faculty that on May 7 they would be meeting with parents at Oxford school; he suggested that before that, "we whould find a time to get our act together." Finding a common meeting

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time was not easy. It was eventually decided to have the intermediates meet on the following Tuesday; the primary meeting time was to be settled on later.

The final discussion of this meeting concerned the Board of Education's decision of the previous week to eliminate the position of resource teacher in the school as a budget reduction measure. Norbert said that he was afraid of that action because "I feel that I would like the help that a resource teacher can give, especially in a new situation."

Sam, the resource teacher, explained the situation further, after which Norbert asked: "Do people feel that the resource teacher is important to us as a new school? Do we sit back an individuals or act together? I was looking forward to Sam for help. Open space and team teaching is not my style." Ellis said that he had already written to the Board in support of the resource teacher,31) and that it would be useful for the faculty to do so also. Rebecca Barone was appointed by the faculty to write a letter.

The faculty eats together. That night most of the faculty met at Regina Hanley's house in Allwood Green for dinner. It was an informal evening, in which only short conversations were concerned with the school. People told each other about their experiences with parent

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31) In his letter, Ellis highly praised Sam's performance thus far, and claimed that he was indispensable, especially since the school was new. He also detailed, for the first time, the job description of the resource teacher in the Brunswick Acres school.

> He (Sam Pennington) is working with the strict guideline that he is not to take on clerical or administrative functions. He has direct access to our school's secretary for all clerical needs; I have passed on no administrative responsibility to him. He is an exemplary teacher. He will function as such.

Brown then further specified the resource teacher's duties as:

(a) teach as a member of a teaching team;
(b) develop important new programs;
(c) improve existing programs, especially basic skills instruction;
(d) help students with unusual needs;
(e) foster parent involvement.

Each of these areas was elaborated in the letter with a paragraph or more.

conferences, which had just finished. In the conferences, many parents had asked what the new school would be like. The teachers admitted to having had some difficulty answering, but all seemed to have stressed the high caliber of the faculty. In the conversations with parents, the teachers also found there were some misconceptions of what the school would be like. For example, some thought that the kindergarten would have 75 children in it at one time, and others thought that teachers didn't want to teach in open space but were forced to by the administration.

Otherwise, the discussions were diverse and non-school oriented. Overall, as Sally had predicted earlier that day, the process of getting to know each other seemed to have begun; interaction among the teachers was high and warm, supportive relationships seemed to be developing.

J. Parent-Teacher Night

On May 7, 1975, in the midst of the diverse community activity expressing dissatisfaction with the proposed educational program of the school, there was to be a meeting to acquaint parents with teachers. In preparation for the meeting, the intermediate teachers met with Ellis. They discussed the format of the presentation briefly, and checked with each other on key issues to find out each other's views, so they could give coherent answers that agreed with those of their team members. A few days later, the primary group gathered at Priscilla Talbot's house for the same purpose. This meeting became a social occasion and only secondarily included preparing for the meeting with parents.

1. The meeting

The setting in which approximately 250 parents gathered to meet the teachers was the open space addition to Oxford elementary school. The instructional area of the addition contained numerous floor-to-ceiling partitions, bookcases and other furniture that created boundaries -- in effect, defined individual classrooms. (In contrast, Lincoln Acres school, which had not yet received furniture, had, at this time no partitions other than eight ten foot long demountable panels jutting periodically from the outer wall. With the exception of the kindergarten the instructional area was one large open space.)

For this occasion, the teachers were more formally dressed than usual and seemed to be fairly nervous as they sat together in back of the room and waited for the meeting to begin. There were more Oriental, Indian and Black parents present at this meeting than at any of the previous ones.

After welcoming the parents, Brown introduced each teacher, who then made a short -- in some cases nearly inaudible -- speech. Each teacher described his or her past teaching experience. Almost all emphasized that they were looking forward to teaching in Lincoln Acres, usually because of anticipated personal growth and challenge, but in one case because, "the Lincoln Acres parents had been so cooperative in the past." Brown then explained the teacher selection process, emphasizing that he had had more than enough candidates to choose from and that "two teams had worked together" before coming to Lincoln Acres.32)

Once introductions had been completed Brown had the teams locate themselves in various parts of the instructional area so they would talk with parents. Groups of parents ranging from 15 to 40 assembled around each teaching team. In most cases the teachers explained their intended program, then answered questions from parents.

In the BB group the drift of the presentation was that Lincoln Acres was not going to be a "real" open school: there would be a considerable amount of structure. The first question parents asked was: "Will there be partitions?" A teacher answered that there would be "no confining partitions." Michael Karalis then made a statement and asked a question:

> Most parents here are aware of what the school is going to look like. I'd like to get a reaction to my statement. A group of parents want to see an alternative -- I was glad to hear what you said about structure -- what do you think about parents who feel that way? They understand what open education is, yet feel strongly that they don't want it.
>
> Teacher: I'd like to be able to show you what we can do in our open education. We have a problem here with the word "open". I'd like you to see it. Our open education will be better than traditional.
>
> Q: Does this apply to all teams -- the way you feel?
>
> Teacher: I don't know what the others are planning but it's probably similar.
>
> Teacher: The benefit of Lincoln Acres is all of our coming at the same time. We have each other.
>
> Teacher: We want the structure. Other teams might have structure because they feel you want it.

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32) Here Ellis was, if not stretching, at least leaning on the truth a bit; though members of the two teams (MTK and BJW) had occasionally shared tasks, they had not actually taught together as teams.

Other groups, while basically expressing similar attitudes and expectations, emphasized the flexibility of the type of education they had planned, but somewhat less so than the BB teachers. They did not say, as Jeanne eventually did, that they would prefer having walls, and changing the educational program from that starting point.

One question raised frequently by parents -- whether noise in open classrooms would result in distraction -- was vividly illustrated, since conversations in one group could be heard by all others. This countered teacher claims that noise would not be a problem.

Generally, the questioning was aggressive, persistent and demanding. The teachers' responses tended to be general and reassuring. In a sense they asked for time to demonstrate that what they had planned would work, instead of attempting to convince them with their answers. It is difficult, of course, to give much more than general answers to questions which are largely hypothetical.

The questions parents asked were similar to those they raised at the LAHA and synagogue meetings. The topics of discipline, attention span, motivation, curriculum, evaluation, noise and alternatives to open space dominated the small group discussions.

Afterward, most teachers thought that the encounter with parents was a positive experience. Several were surprised with the types of questions asked; they felt that some were hostile and that others showed parents did not understand what open education was about. Rebecca Barone, speaking for her team members, said that the parent hostility she detected made her want to work harder so she could "show them that open education works."

2. The LAHA resolution

On the following night, with attendance lower than usual for meetings with the new school as a topic, 27 LAHA members voted for and 17 against the resolution demanding "alternative" forms of education in Lincoln Acres school (see page 92 above). According to the constitution of the association, a majority vote meant that the resolution had the endorsement of the entire membership.

K. Brown's Reply to the Critics

Eight days after the Parent-Teacher Night at Oxford school an article appeared on the front page of the Washingtonville Post in which Brown described his educational philosophy and objectives. The bold-type headline read: "Brown: 'Open School not Permissive.'"

The article, written by the editor of the newspaper, provided background on both Brown's career and the educational movement toward open space schools in the United States. Sprinkled in between are quotes from an interview with Brown. In them he attempts to state his intentions precisely, and clear up what he believed were false impressions. For example:

> The open space concept has been linked in the press to free education -- a concept almost antithetical to open education. Unlike students in "free" schools, open space students are constantly monitored and always doing the things they need to do and should be doing. Open schools are simply more individualized. A child's individual curriculum is tailored to suit his or her needs.
>
> I'm a Northern New England Yankee. The idea of coming into a school after learning as much as I have about how to do things and then turning the school over to a seven-year-old is absurd.

The text of the article then states that Lincoln Acres school will have demountable partitions, and that students will be taught basic skills and follows with a brief account of the recent petition for traditional classes in the school. There is a comment from Brown on what he considered parents' lack of trust in the ability of the teachers, and their reliance on rumors rather than on information directly sought from him. The article then continues:

> Mr. Brown says the failures of open education are due to programs forced on teachers without much input from the teachers. "You are saying to teachers who are already working harder than those working the more traditional way that they must swallow some new program the administration has decided they should teach."

The article then points out that Brown and the teachers had already been working together on the program for the school, and that work would continue through the summer, particularly on curriculum objectives. Other topics would include teacher and student responsibilities and student discipline. The article ends with the following quote from Brown:

> I think if you analyzed the time spent teaching the basic skills in open schools you'd find skills are taught in less time with no loss in test scores. And you'd find that students have a greater sense of ownership in their schools, feel better about it, and have a greater motivation than do kids in conventional schools. Tests, statistics are averages. The kid who fails in a conventional school is balanced by the successes. But in open education the individual who fails cannot be forgotten. We must deal with him.

The basic message that Brown presented in this interview was that open education is not essentially different than "traditional" education. The difference is that, as a result of more elaborate staffing arrangements, it permits individualization of instruction, a more effective learning situation. He also made it clear that to a large extent the critics of open education -- at least the variety of it planned for Lincoln Acres school -- were not basing their opinions on what to him were "the facts".

L. Brown and Biddle Meet with Parents

Shortly after the article appeared Brown and Biddle decided that it would be helpful to meet with parents in small groups to explain the school, since according to Biddle, "Coffeeklatches are the best method; mass meetings don't work." Between the end of May and mid-June, Brown met twice with groups of a dozen parents in Lincoln Acres residents' homes; at another such meeting, Biddle was also present.

Charles Frisch, a Board of Education member and an influential leader in educational matters in the community, attended the first small parents' meeting, he commented afterward:

> I hope he gets to everybody. The community needs somebody that makes them think they're being listened to. Ellis Brown has that ability. They want to believe -- I want to believe.

According to Brown, the one meeting that Biddle attended had been less critical of his policies than the other two. Brown's overall evaluation of the meetings was positive: "I was very pleased with them, they were effective exchanges." The day after the first meeting, he gave a reassuring report to the teachers: the community, he said was not upset with them, but with Biddle and the Board.

Just before these meetings began, Brown said to the researcher that he had begun to have doubts about Biddle's power base in the community. He discovered that Bill Gerson, the principal of Valley Junior High School, had been actively campaigning for Biddle's job. He had also formed the opinion that Biddle didn't have much support from the Board of Education, noting that for the past few years the Board has not granted him an ordinarily routine salary increment.

Although Brown did not indicate what impact this would have on his own political strategy, assuming that he had one, it was clear that he was beginning to reassess his relationship with Biddle, and the degree to which he could rely on him for support that was backed by a reliable constituency.

Biddle's attitudes toward the problems with Lincoln Acres school at this time are also revealing. In late May, he said privately to the researcher that he was not prepared to spend $15,000 on partitions for the school, since they would probably not be in use in three years. He attributed the cause of community dissatisfaction with the proposed educational program to the reasons families had moved to Washingtonville: in his opinion, they were "running from the city" and its problems. As he saw it, there were two camps in the community; those who wanted reading, writing and arithmetic and those who viewed education as something more than the three R's. In his words: "Most of those involved are not self-actualizing people."

M. The Last Faculty Meeting before the Summer Workshop

Combined with a picnic, the final faculty meeting before the summer workshop was held at Sam Pennington's house, on May 29, 1975. After collaborative preparation of the food, but before eating, there was a brief work session. Ellis reminded one primary team, Sally, Jane and Katie, that they had not yet given him their list of math objectives. Sam then reintroduced the idea of a residential communications workshop, which Glenda had first proposed at the April 17 meeting. He said that he had considered having it shortly after July 4 for two days at Rolling Ridge, a rustic outdoor education facility. Anticipating that some teachers might be reluctant to attend, he emphasized that the workshop would not be "heavy", in the sense that people would be forced to reveal themselves in any deep, possibly uncomfortable, way. Regina then asked if it was necessary to spend time away from the school. Norbert answered that in his experience working away from the school setting was beneficial, because it permitted focusing energy on one task. Persuaded, Regina agreed, and said she thought the idea of the workshop was a good one. Jeanne then raised the question if Rolling Ridge was the most suitable place to have the workshop; she had had unpleasant experiences with rooms and food on recent trips there with students. Further discussion of a location for the workshop ended with the understanding that Sam would look into the possibility of other places.

When to hold the communications workshop then became the issue. Agreement was more or less reached that the most productive time would be at the beginning of the summer workshop, since the training in communication could then influence the remainder of the summer's work.

Near the end of this short meeting, Norbert inquired about the fate of the resource teacher position. Ellis explained that he had received assurances from the central administration that funds would be provided for Sam's position.

Ellis then told the faculty about his first meeting with a small group of parents, which had occurred the night before. He said he had found that the parents were impressed with the staff, and had nothing against either the teachers or himself. Their grievance was with Biddle and the Board of Education, who they felt had not delivered on the promise of partitions. It was his view that while some parents still wanted self-contained classrooms, most were willing to give the school as planned a chance. The teachers were relieved to hear this. The pre-picnic meeting ended with Monica Selwin, the school secretary, explaining the daily student attendance procedure that she thought would create the least amount of work for the teachers. The picnic began.

Ellis cooked hamburgers while Sam and Sally served side dishes that were passed around. After dinner, the teachers sat in small groups on Sam's back lawn and discussed a variety of topics including Zen philosophy and methods for growing lush house plants. Occasionally, school-related topics surfaced, but no serious discussion of issues related to the new school took place. Ellis left earlier than the others, to attend an audition for a play sponsored by a nearby community group. Within two hours all of the teachers had left what was a relaxed, enjoyable, social occasion.

N. Continued Controversy

June, a hectic month of restless children and endless paper work for teachers, had no meetings of the Lincoln Acres faculty. However, activity concerning the school did not cease.

1. Citizens complain to the Board

On June 2, 1975, LAHA presented its resolution to the Board of Education. Barbara Collins, who was also at the meeting, told the Board that her petition was more specific than the LAHA resolution and should be acted on. Collins continued:

> The people of Lincoln Acres have great faith in Mr. Brown but we want to know what happened to bond issue promises. None of the original plans are being followed through and we feel we've been lied to.

At this meeting, Brown told the Board that the teachers would decide where partitions should be placed, after consulting with parents and assessing student needs. Biddle said that neither he nor any other school official had ever stated specifically what kind of partitions would be placed in the school. He went on to say that there was the possibility of creating space with partitions of furniture and bookcases, which were being constructed locally.

Collins then approached the subject from another angle, claiming that teachers at Oxford school had told her they would like more partitions. (This comment resulted in a letter in the next edition of the Courier from the open space teachers in Oxford school, including Sam

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Pennington; it denied that they wanted more partitions, and claimed that none of them had ever spoken with Collins.)

Another Lincoln Acres resident, Rob Goldman, made the following statements at the June 2 meeting:

> The Superintendent and the school board's credibility is at stake. I was at a meeting where Dr. Biddle promised floor-to-ceiling partitions which would be nailed to the floor and could be moved in a weekend. Because he assured us of these partitions, I recommended [that] the Jaycees support the school bond issue.

He continued:

> The thing that bothers us so much is we're not listened to. Whether the parents like it or not we're having the open system and a multi-age first, second and third grade grouping. This is revolutionary, and yet we're getting no choice in the matter.

2. The proposal for a community survey

About this time Charles Frisch, a Lincoln Acres resident and school board member, in response to the community criticism, began considering the idea of having Brown survey the community to find out parents' attitudes toward the school. He told the researcher:

> At the next board meeting we will try to get a "go, no-go" thing. If the community is that upset with the proposed type of school, then I think we should have a school that reflects their wishes. Ellis will find out what they want and report to the Board. Personally, from an educational point of view it doesn't matter whether it is closed or open. What I'm suggesting is, do what the community wants. Good education can be delivered in either situation. As of now there is a 5-4 vote on the board to go with the community. I don't see what's so radical about doing what the community wants.

As he understood the situation, some members of the community felt, somewhat justifiably, lied to concerning the partitions -- since the administration had never been precise as to what they meant by the terms "partitions" and "alternatives." More importantly, he suspected that no one knew what the actual opinionsof Lincoln Acres parents were. In an attempt to understand the spectrum of community opinion, he intended to propose to the Board at its next meeting that they survey the community and decide by August 1 on the basis of that information whether or not to change the educational program of the school.

In the course of the conversation, Frisch made several predictions:

> Ellis has a crucial decision to make in the summer. If he comes up with the wrong decision he'll have some trouble. If he decides they want it open and they actually want it closed he'll have problems. If they would have a situation as at Oxford, then there would be little opposition. When you think about change you don't do it in one fell swoop.

But he said, somewhat later:

> I also think that once the school opens the community will settle down -- I have a lot of faith in Ellis. If it doesn't, it will be years before the community settles down.

The Board meeting. The Board asked Brown to attend their June 9, 1975 meeting so he could answer questions about the program for the school. When asked, he explained the proposed organization of the school as having a self-contained kindergarten, along with four instructional areas in the open space area each with 75 children and a team of teachers.

Biddle, in response to a question from a Board member, said that the deadline for purchasing steel partitions had passed and that even if they did want to order them they would not arrive by September.

Frisch's suggestion for a survey was acted on: the Board asked Brown to survey the community on its attitude toward the new school and report the results to them by July 15, 1975. The Board indicated they would not make a decision concerning the school until the information was examined.

Thirty residents of Lincoln Acres attended this meeting and tried to speak, but were denied permission by the Board president, who maintained, despite heated exchanges, that the public could only have time to talk if before the meeting they had requested space on the agenda. (While they were not on the agenda for this meeting, the Lincoln Acres parents were listed for the Board's June 30, 1975 meeting.) They abided by the ruling but did not accept it; they charged that the school board was indifferent to their requests.

Brown's plan for the survey. Brown was not entirely clear on what uses the results of the survey were to be put to, but thought that the Board might use them as the basis of a redesign of the school. It was his opinion, however, that for all practical purposes no changes in the school would be made by September. He did say to the researcher that he considered using the information from the questionnaires for his dissertation.33)

The plan he developed following the Board meeting was to administer a thirty-minute semi-structured interview to all households with students scheduled to attend Lincoln Acres school in the fall. This would occur during the first week of the summer workshop, when the interview guide would be constructed and administered by teachers and parent volunteers. The plan was to recruit the parents through advertisements in the local newspaper. According to Brown, the format for the type of interview he had in mind was developed by the Institute for Responsive Education at Yale University.

3. Other events

In April, approval of the summer workshop proposal was granted; the Board of Education provided funds equalling ten percent of each teacher's yearly salary. After further negotiations, Brown was able to obtain an additional week of salary so that teachers could make up for time lost conducting the community survey. The workshop was scheduled to begin on July 1, 1975 and continue until July 29, 1975. Near the beginning of the period, on July 7 and 8, a two-day residential communications workshop for the faculty had been scheduled.34) All classroom teachers, the school secretary, the resource teacher and the principal were to participate in this first phase of intensive planning for the new school, which was to open in September, 1975.

Monica Selwin, the school secretary, and Sam Pennington called nearly 40 possible hotels, camps and other places for holding the communications workshop and had difficulty finding a suitable site for early July. Finally, they made arrangements to have the workshop at a nearby Playboy Club Hotel.

At this time, Biddle settled a problem with the floor contractor that had developed earlier in the year. The concrete floor had been

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33) Not surprisingly, Brown was searching for a dissertation topic at this time. He spent a week in Boston in mid-June consulting with his dissertation advisor.

34) Although Ellis had not yet taken advantage of the matching funds available from our research project to hire external consulting assistance, he asked whether funds might be used to support the communications workshop, even though it was to be designed and carried out by an internal person (Sam Pennington). The project director agreed that this use met the spirit of the matching funds' purposes (to facilitate effective planning and implementation) and consented to pay half the costs.

laid unevenly and as a result could cause rapid wear of the carpet covering the instructional area. Biddle sought either a large cash settlement or a redo of the entire floor. The contractor at first agreed to pay a sum considerably below what Biddle had requested, but when threatened with the possibility of a lawsuit, agreed to fix the floor between June 23 and July 11, 1975.

4. The conflict continues

On June 30, 1975, the Board of Education held its weekly meeting with the Lincoln Acres school as the major agenda item. Along with people from other sections of the township, 50 Lincoln Acres residents attended the meeting. Two teachers, Rebecca Barone and Glenda Jacobs. were the only members of the faculty present.

After some brief regular Board business, Lincoln Acres school became the focus. The arguments presented by parents were, for the most part, those that have already been presented. Collins and LAHA members. along with some new antagonists, confronted Biddle and the Board.

Quotes were read from the bond issue literature which stated that "most inside walls will be demountable partitions". Paul Elfenbein, president of LAHA, said at one point, "I think you're jerking us around, Dr. Biddle. I agree in principle with open space but you used the word partitions, not cabinets or woodwork." Biddle argued that the staff of the school should be allowed to determine if they wanted to use partitions. This was unacceptable to many present, and one woman said, "I'm not all the interested in what the staff thinks, I want what's best for my child."

Marie Bonomi, a resident of Lincoln Acres, argued against multi-aged classes on the grounds that the academic and social differences between a fourth and a sixth grade student were too great for them to be in the same class together. She presented the Board with a letter requesting "alternatives", which was signed by 13 other parents. Another parent, Alex Georgiades, argued in vivid language that his son had been in an open space classroom the previous year and had "progressively regressed" until he was placed in a traditional classroom where he once again became a good student.

Georgiades and others argued against the board-mandated survey of the community, claiming that the 1972 referendum had already indicated what the community wanted: partitions. Other community members, in many cases newly-arrived residents, urged that the survey should be conducted so that they could have an opportunity to influence plans for the school.

Sam Schwartz, who had been a member of the principal selection committee, accused Biddle of "double talk" and acting both as an educator and as a politician. Then, Sylvia Peabody, a school board member from

Lincoln Acres who said she favored alternatives, charged that Biddle had hired only teachers and a principal interested in working in open space. Biddle denied any role in teacher selection. Estelle Hunter, another school board member, said that "I strongly am in favor of offering parents a choice, and believe the people in this room have been shafted."

Continuing the attack, board member Gerrie Holden said:

> The children belong to parents and this administration has no right to jam something down their throats. I want to see the results of the survey, but I believe we should give parents a choice.

Biddle replied to Holden, saying:

> I never said the administration would force anything down their throats. But the staff in that school is good enough to teach in a tent and I'm concerned that we don't push anything on them before they've had the opportunity to work with the kids, the community and fellow staff members to determine what they need. After all they must work with [the] equipment every day.35)

A request by the Board vice-president for parent volunteers to help conduct the survey of the Lincoln Acres community ended the tumultuous meeting.

It seems fair to say that throughout the period between February, 1975, when the opposition to the school began, and this June 30, 1975 meeting, Lincoln Acres parents had demonstrated almost no public support for open space education in the school. In fact, the only directly supportive statement was a letter to the editor of the Courier, on June 19, 1975. Either there was little actual support for totally open education or its proponents did not view the visible opponents as a serious challenge and so said little in public. It is also possible that community norms and the pressure generated by the petition and LAHA resolution made it difficult, if not impossible, for those favoring open education to support it actively.

O. The Emerging Organizational Design

A month before the intensive planning -- filling in the details of the original vision -- was to begin, the major features of the school

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35) This is a direct quote from a Courier article on the meeting. Biddle's reported use of "equipment" implicitly seems to include the walls, partitions, etc.

were substantially complete. Of course, the faculty was not entirely familiar with one another yet, nor had there been an opportunity to test or refine various proposed components of the system. Nevertheless, more than an outline of a school existed. The basic organizational properties developed thus far are briefly discussed and commented on below.

1. Features internal to the school

First, the school was staffed with actively interested volunteers, most of whom were experienced teachers -- though they had had little or no team teaching experience. As we have commented previously, the principal's qualifications fit his new assignment very well. Along with the teachers, he was interested in producing an innovative form of education, at least in terms of the educational practices in Washingtonville.

Secondly, the technological core of the school, while not finished, was firmly established. The key component in the educational delivery system, teaching teams, had been formed, and they, with varying degrees of effort, were building personal and working relationships. Open space education and multi-age grouping of students, two central aspects of the innovation, had been actively accepted by the faculty when they accepted a position at the school, and were considered in planning. Curriculum, in the form of highly-specific objectives, was being developed, along with a computer-based system to monitor accomplishment. Finally, underlying these technologies was a philosophical focus on individualization of instruction.

The administrative structure is a third dimension of the organization that had been formed by this time. Despite Brown's early intention to operate as a charismatic leader, he functioned more as a "first among equals." He consulted with the faculty on all major decisions, he avoided arbitrary deadlines, and he made specific gestures to the faculty to indicate that he was to be treated as a colleague, not primarily as a superior. At times, however, there appeared to be tension between his apparently easy-going, non-directive leadership style and latent "charismatic" traits. This was frequently evident in a very concrete way: Brown's voice was flexible and capable of ranging in a short time span from low, mellow tones to crisp, impersonal, "bureaucratic" pitches. When he used the latter -- which in these early months was relatively infrequently -- it was clear to the teachers that the meeting should come to order, that a decision should be reached, or that something displeased him. This habit, a form of social control, resembled a technique teachers often use -- modulating their voices to gain the attention of a class of youngsters. At times this mannerism seemed to abrogate the egalitarian norms that were developing in the group.

During this period, it also appeared that teachers welcomed another role for Ellis: that of bufferer and negotiator with the outside world (including the central office, the Board, and the community). We might comment that this role naturally bore the seeds of a further reduction of Ellis' egalitarian emphasis: the more he buffered, the more special information he would garner and the more he negotiated, the more tempted he might be to make decisions rather than share them.

Within the school, however, as had been the plan, Ellis, Sam and Regina Hanley acted as facilitators for the teachers' work. In the case of Sam Pennington, although his role was prescribed in a job description, the duties he could be expected to perform were still somewhat unclear to teachers. Consequently, his rank in the authority structure of the organization was vague; when teachers asked him to make a decision he almost always referred them to Ellis. His passing of decision-making on to Ellis was congruent with his job description, which specified that he was not to perform administrative (or clerical) tasks. That teachers approached Sam with the expectation that he could actively make decisions, however, reflected their ambiguous understanding of his role.

Within the teaching teams, there were no formal differentiations of rank. "Team leader" was not defined as a position, and the idea that one of the team members should in some way either represent the team or be responsible for its activities, was never discussed. When aspects of the school that could possibly differentiate team members in an informal way were discussed, every effort was made to prevent or minimize them. An example is the faculty's rejecting parent selection of their children's teachers, a procedure which could have resulted in a differentiated prestige system among the teachers.

By this time, however, it was true that informal leaders were emerging in each team. In the kindergarten team, Sarah was more outspoken and was often regarded as representing the others. Priscilla served the same purpose in the MTK team, as did Sally in the NBC team and Norbert in the BJW team. At this time, the researcher could see no differentiation in the power Alan and Jeanne exerted in the management of their team.

Overall, the decision-making process, the administrative apparatus, decentralization of tasks, and the informal interpersonal relationships that had developed in the faculty suggest that the configuration, or pattern, of relationships in the school at this time was collegial. Additionally, the attempt at creating ownership of the plans, coupled with the reward structure, which was implicitly based on the intrinsic satisfaction provided by planning and eventually teaching, reinforced teacher desire for, and helped create, a normative climate that might be labeled "egalitarian professionalism".

Though relatively little explicit attention had been paid in the planning to the normative climate of the school, it seemed true that -- channelled by the structural features we have outlined -- some informal standards for appropriate behavior had already emerged. These norms can perhaps best be described as a set of implicit sentences, which an observer could infer were serving as guides to appropriate behavior:

Everyone's ideas are OK.

We should respond to each other, not ignore people's contributions.

Speak up, say what's on your mind.

We are professionals, not employees.

We are friends, and shouldn't be formal with each other.

No one is out to get anyone else here in our group.

We decide things together.

We know better than the parents.

Norms epitomized by sentences of this sort, like most norms, were never very explicit. Yet they did already seem to be guiding teachers' behavior, both toward each other, toward Ellis and Sam, and toward the community.

2. Features linking school to environment

By this time, mechanisms for coordinating the activities of the school with the community during the early planning had been formulated; some were put into practice immediately, others were earmarked for later implementation.

First, a series of ad hoc meetings between the administration and small parent groups, and more-structured introductory meetings of the faculty with interested community members were held. The local weekly newspaper was also used by Brown, and on occasion by individual faculty members, as a medium for their messages. Less direct influence on the community was exerted through the support that the superintendent gave the faculty.

However, no other "durable" environmental linking mechanisms were yet in place. The summer workshop proposal did contain several intended linkages: in the final week of the workshop, under objective 8, "educational decision-making roles" for parents and students were to be defined. In the language of the proposal:

> During the final week of the project, parents will be invited for several half-days to view the teaching space, collaborate in developing report cards and other communications routines, start parent aide programs and design community use of the school.

The proposal also contains provision for a temporary linkage that could potentially develop into a stable, long-term means of legitimation for the new educational program. Charles Frisch, the director of the state Right to Read program, a resident of Lincoln Acres and Board of Education member, was to evaluate the results of the summer workshop, especially the curriculum checklists.

The summer proposals also alluded to the idea that parents would serve as volunteers in the school -- still another environmental linkage mechanism.

Another communication device, a house-to-house survey of the community, had been considered by Brown as early as January 10, 1975. It was his view that this type of survey would serve as a more effective communication device than would public mass meetings. The Board's decision in June meant that this type of linkage would be used at least once; whether it would be repeated was not clear.

It seems clear that a good deal of faculty ambivalence36) toward the community was present during the creation of these environmental linkages -- both the temporary ones and the more durable ones anticipated. We have characterized this earlier (Part I) as the dilemma of "environmental contact vs avoidance". At several Lincoln Acres faculty meetings, there was debate over whether to approach the community actively or delay meeting with them; over whether or not to be responsive to their demands; and finally, over the extent to which parents should be involved in planning and operation of the school. These dilemmas were often resolved by the flow of events as much as by explicit faculty decisions. For example, although Brown's initial reaction was to postpone his appearance before LAHA, the insistence of the chairperson of the education committee persuaded him to meet with them earlier than he had wanted to.

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36) Merton and Barber (1963) identify "sociological" ambivalence as something generated by social structure, not an individual, psychological phenomenon. They write (pp. 94-95) that: "In its most extended sense, sociological ambivalence refers to incompatible normative expectations of attitudes, beliefs and behavior assigned to a status or to a set of statuses in a society. In its most restricted sense, sociological ambivalence refers to incompatible normative expectations incorporated in a single role of a single social status (for example, the therapist role of the physician as distinct from other roles of his status as researcher, administrator, professional colleague, participant in the professional association, etc.).

As we shall elaborate in a moment, the incompatible expectations for the teachers had their source in the conflicting normative structures of democratic and professional values.

P. Analysis and Commentary

What might have accounted for the events so far? In this section we analyze the planning and early implementation in terms of the primary tasks facing the planning/implementation group: social-architectural design, actualization, knowledge utilization, and political stabilization.

1. Social-architectural design

So far, how good was the fit between the emerging organizational design and the original vision for the school? Broadly speaking, it seemed reasonably close: the team set-up, the individualized approach, the flexible use of space, multi-aged classes -- and above all the right of the faculty members to participate in designing their own educational environment -- were in place or on the way.

However, two areas of the original vision remained relatively underdeveloped: the idea of responsiveness to community needs, and the hope that the school would become a model for others in the district.

Teachers' ambivalent attitudes toward the parents have already been explored. It should be noted here that no permanent structure for parent influence, such as an advisory council, had been contemplated. Except for discussions during part of the last week of the summer workshop, the only regular contact with parents after the school opened would occur through report cards, parent conferences and the PTA.

Although at this point in planning it was too early to estimate the impact, if any, that Lincoln Acres school might have on the educational practices of other schools in Washingtonville, it should be noted that no structures were being developed to enable the school to be a resource, or model, in the district. Perhaps it was Brown's hope that the school would become a model by merely providing an exciting example. But examples need to be communicated, and there were no proposals for visits, documentation of practices, in-service days with other staffs, Lincoln Acres teachers' serving as consultants to other schools, or the like.

2. Actualization

As when the planning began, the implicit strategy for linking plans with implementation was to have the operators -- that is, Brown and the teachers -- do the planning. The summer workshop proposal strengthened this approach and outlined a fairly concrete set of outcomes anticipated to influence -- even constrain -- implementation. It constituted a public promise to the school district that certain implementation efforts would be undertaken.

From the beginning, Brown asked the teams to do much of the planning on their own. Besides increasing the teachers' investment in the school, this strategy created an extra pressure: consensual group decisions are more likely to be actually carried out. This pressure affected both the teams and Ellis. In the case of the teams, it would be difficult for members not to honor commitments they had shaped together. For Ellis, unilateral administrative decisions, especially those that could negate teacher decisions, would be more difficult to make and enforce.

3. Knowledge utilization

Generally speaking, it seems fair to say that Ellis and the faculty used only modest amounts of outside expert knowledge during this planning period. Though they listened to book salesmen and drew lists of objectives from texts and other's prior practice, more often than not they simply relied on their own past experience. The research project's offer of external consulting help was converted into support for an internal facilitator, Sam. There were no suggestions that other open-space, team-taught, schools outside the district be visited.

Why should this be? We have already alluded to the norms of professionalism in the faculty. These norms have at least two sub-categories, autonomy and expertise, and some discussion of these in terms of particular events may be helpful. First, Biddle's actions in some instances (for example, his intervention in furniture design) were viewed by Brown as a hindrance. As we have seen, one of Brown's objectives, at least in rhetoric, was to be independent of the central office and to plan his own school with the assistance of the faculty. Secondly, when Ellis and Sam rejected the idea of external consulting assistance to help with organizational planning and team-building, they said explicitly that internal expertise in those areas existed (in the person of Sam) and that building the capability of the faculty itself was important.

Were the claims to expertise justified? Sam Pennington's source of expertise was his seven years of experience as a teacher, several of which were in open classrooms, and his training and active interest in organizational development and group dynamics. Ellis Brown's claim to expertise was based on his experience as a planner and principal of an open space elementary school and his graduate training in educational administration. Regina Hanley was a trained librarian and in the year prior to coming to Lincoln Acres school had set up the library in another new school. The teaching-team members had a wide range of abilities and experience in education and advanced academic degrees in many cases. There was then, some reason for the faculty to consider their own resources adequately expert in relation to the task.

Finally, Brown's commitment to "ownership" -- investment -- by teachers during the planning may have led him to believe that use of outside experts would jeopardize this important quality. So, both the professional desire for autonomy and the need for ownership of the planning product increased reliance on the available internal expertise.

4. Political stabilization

As we have seen, durable linkages to the community were still largely in the planning stages. At this point, however, it seemed clear that significant numbers of parents opposed the proposed school design. Although the early political linkages (between the central office and the community, for example) had enabled resource acquisition (money for the building and staffing of the school), it seemed clear that endorsement, environmental approval, was decidedly absent.[37] As we shall see, relations between the school and community were to become critical for the success of the innovation. How did this opposition -- lack of endorsement -- develop over time?

Initiation of parent opposition. The primary source of community dissatisfaction seemed to be a sense that a legitimate agreement had been violated. As the plans for the school developed, it became clear that the educational program would depart substantially from what the community had expected -- and voted on. Instead of the 18 classrooms with demountable walls specified in the bond issue literature, the actual plans, as presented to the community by Brown at the LAHA meeting, included five open-space classroom areas, with moveable walls around only one, the kindergarten. This change in plans was particularly disturbing to those residents who had actively worked for passage of the bond issue: the planning actions were not legitimate ("We have been lied to.")

Intensification of the controversy. In the early months of Brown's tenure, parent disapproval of the plans was brought to his attention. Parents also informed Biddle and the Board of Education of their criticism. All three parties -- but especially Brown and Biddle -- responded with statements that adhered to the original plan and were designed to reassure the parents that the educational program would be flexible enough to accommodate any student's special needs.

Not assuaged -- indeed, more alienated -- the protesting parents took more direct and formal action to press for their demands. Barbara Collins presented the Board with her petition for one self-contained, traditional classroom for each grade and LAHA presented its resolution

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37) Here we refer to endorsement from the community environment. Generally speaking, Brown appeared to have been relatively successful in obtaining both resources and endorsement from the bureaucratic environment of the school. The summer workshop proposal was easily approved and he was able to get the types of furniture and other equipment needed for the school. He was also careful not to act in such a way as to reduce endorsement from other principals (for example, he arranged the instructional development day to both his and David Hauptmann's satisfaction).

calling for "alternatives." As Coleman (1957) suggests, community-wide voluntary organizations (such as LAHA) can channel conflict to some extent and prevent it from becoming an all-out battle: this may well have been the case here.

Early responses to the opposition. As the controversy increased, Brown and Biddle adopted a temporary strategy of meeting with community members in small coffeeklatches. Brown's impression from the first of these meetings, which he did not revise, was that community anger was not directed against himself and the faculty, but against Biddle and the Board of Education, since they were supposedly the ones not fulfilling the promises made in the bond issue. Brown had also received private assurances from community leaders that he and the teachers were not the targets of complaints.

Throughout this period, the teachers obtained information about the controversy through newspaper articles in the local press, through their meeting at Oxford school in May with parents, through rumors (several lived in the school district) and through Ellis.

The major messages Ellis gave the faculty were that, in effect, he would act as a buffer between them and the community, and that he had discovered that the parental hostility was not directed at any member of the faculty but at the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education. For the most part, the teachers accepted this view of the conflict. But bewildered by the parents' attacks -- and ambivalent toward them even before the controversy erupted -- they tended to minimize direct contact with them.

> I have doubts about bringing in parents so soon... Do we need them a full week?.... They should be involved, but I don't see how yet... We have to draw a fine line where parents are concerned.. We're not ready yet.

General comments. Basically, the dubious legitimacy of the plans for the school was the central issue raised by the protesting parents; in their view, Biddle had evaded his responsibility to fulfill the specifications of the bond issue. From Biddle's perspective, this was not true: he stated that partitions, as requested by the faculty, would in fact be used in the school. More importantly, in his judgement and in the judgement of the faculty, the needs of all students would be met in the school. In other words, Biddle asked the community to trust his and the staff's expertise in educational matters.* At the core of the conflict,

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* Biddle felt after reading this that he had always stressed faculty-parent partnership, and that problems should be "worked out jointly within the school."

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then, was a clash between two pervasive value complexes in our society: professionalism and democracy.

The readiness of the Board to accept Frisch's proposal to survey the community as a basis for further plans can be seen as an effort to restore lost legitimacy -- to reassert the claims of democracy over the decisions of experts.

VI. INTENSIVE PLANNING CONTINUES: THE SUMMER WORKSHOP

A. The Summer Workshop Begins: The Survey of the Community

On July 1, the first day of the summer workshop, the Lincoln Acres school faculty and 15 parent volunteers assembled at 9:00 a.m. in the instructional area of the school. Furniture had not yet been placed in the area, and the group sat on folding chairs arranged in a semi-circle, with the teachers and parents forming separate groups. Just behind where they were sitting, workmen were busily removing the carpet to repair the incorrectly-constructed floor.

1. Planning the survey

Brown explained that the Board of Education had requested a survey of parents of Lincoln Acres students, and that after considerable thought he had decided that conducting the survey was up to parents and teachers. After a brief introduction on the benefits of face-to-face interviews and comments on problems with question-writing, such as bias, he divided the group into smaller units by assigning several parents to work with a team of teachers. The task each group had was to "brainstorm" areas to be included in the questionnaire.

Each group settled into an area of the school to work. Before this, however, most of the teachers -- out of view of the parents -- expressed bewilderment over what they were supposed to be doing. Few had heard of the survey before this meeting and one teacher was under the impression that the task was going to be to survey the uneven floor. Dori, Priscilla and Wanda, incensed by what they considered an inappropriate task for teachers, heatedly discussed the matter and were reluctant to participate. In general, the teachers were either totally unaware of what had been planned for the first day of the workshop, or were only partially, and in some cases erroneously, informed.

Feeling somewhat awkward in each other's presence, the small groups of parents and teachers discussed recent events concerning the school, and began to compile lists of questions they thought should be asked of parents. These meetings were punctuated with questions from both parents and teachers. "Who's going to interpret the results? Should the entire community or only parents of students be asked? Will the results be valid? What use will the results be put to?"

Forty-five minutes later, with their brainstormed lists, the groups reconvened in the open space area. The questions were read by a member of each small group and written on a chalkboard by Brown. The suggestions ranged from asking if parents thought the school should have bicycle racks to whether they had any fears about open education.

Barbara Collins, who had turned up as a parent volunteer, complained after the proposed question on bicycle racks that the Board didn't want to know that. It was her opinion that "they want to know whether or not we want partitions, if people are satisfied with the Lincoln Acres school as now planned." Ellis agreed, and reminded the group that a list of questions that could be asked in twenty minutes was what was needed.

Once the questions were presented by each group and listed on the chalkboard, Brown went through each list, crossing out those questions that he thought were not germane. He told the group their purpose was to tell him what should be included and to stop him if he eliminated areas they thought important. No clear rationale or method for the questions and areas Brown chose was evident. When he was asked why he crossed out a question about the way the controversy over the school had affected children his answer was, "We can't code it." This ended the discussion and he continued rejecting questions. Collins made the suggestion that a question about differences between the school as it currently was and what people had thought it would be should be included and it was. The session ended after Brown asked the group which of them wanted to be trained as interviewers at 1:00 p.m., and at 7:00 p.m. He did not propose activities for the time before the interview training, but in response to a question he said that the questionnaires would be prepared by 1:00, and that "you can stay around if you want to contribute to their wording."

With the meeting over, teachers again began complaining among themselves about their involvement in the survey. Jeanne said, "I don't want to do this crap. We didn't even know about it." Bert, Glenda and Rebecca agreed with her. Another teacher experienced the situation as confining and thought that instead of conducting interviews the staff should meet privately with small groups of parents.

Ten minutes later, at 11:40 a.m. Ellis, Sam, Jane, Sally, Katie, and three parents, Barbara Collins, Rob Goldman and Mrs. Horn, met in the multi-purpose room to begin rewording questions and preparing the final version of the questionnaire. Just after this process began, three teachers left and Wanda and Priscilla arrived. Wanda told the group that she didn't want to do the survey and that the teachers were considering talking to the Board about it. Priscilla suggested that because of the survey teachers might not want to remain employed at the school. Ellis' response was minimal: he listened and nodded. Wanda and Priscilla left the room and Ellis, Sam and the three parents continued working along on the questionnaire.

At 1:00, the teachers -- who in effect had boycotted the question revision session -- and half of the parent volunteers met again in the open space area for training in interviewing techniques. Brown distributed and briefly explained a training guide for interviewers, which covered topics such as beginning the interview, recording the responses, impartiality and how to handle respondents not at home or refusing to be interviewed. He then reviewed the commitments teachers and parent volunteers had made: teachers would be paid for the days spent interviewing and all completed interviews were to be left at the principal's office by July 9. He added that at 9:00 the following morning there would be an optional meeting for teachers to discuss a possible meeting with the Board of Education concerning the survey.

After these announcements, each interviewer selected eight names at random from a box containing all the names of parents of Lincoln Acres students. Questionnaires were distributed, after which Brown conducted a session that involved role playing in groups of three: one person acted as the interviewer, another as the interviewee and the third as an observer and critic. For those who could not attend this session, a similar training experience was repeated that evening.

The questionnaire. The questionnaire used to interview parents, after a page of standard demographic questions, consisted of 10 open-ended questions, some of which had probes. Chart 6.1 presents the open-ended questions. They were far-ranging in content and minimally structured. This increased the opportunity for respondents to use the interview as a forum for almost anything on their minds concerning the Lincoln Acres school -- or for that matter, about education in general. From a technical standpoint, putting aside questions of validity and reliability, the data these questions would produce, even with highly trained interviewers, would be difficult to code and interpret.

2. The faculty's opposition

At 9:00 a.m. the following day the faculty met with Brown to discuss what, if any, action they should take concerning the survey. After recounting the Board meeting at which he had been mandated to conduct the survey, Brown said that the Board more or less indicated that they were more afraid of the community than they were of the teachers. He continued:

> I told them that the human costs would be great in terms of kids and us. I feel differently about things now. I would support a letter to the Board saying that certain things were promised to you, for example, open space. The Board is so scared at this point that they need to know there is another side to this, that the community isn't the only side. Biddle has offered us five weeks but that doesn't matter much. This has come between us and the community and it's too bad. We were going along well. If it comes from you the Board might fear being faced by angry teachers and might change their minds.

A brief discussion followed, deciding on the action of a letter to the Board. Someone also suggested that the teachers request a private meeting with the Board, on the grounds that personnel matters were involved. Brown then left the school building to keep an appointment.

CHART 6.1

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you know about the school?
   What have you read?
   What have you heard? From whom?
   What meetings have you gone to?
   What does open education mean to you? (Please give specific examples)

2. Give examples of things you like about Lincoln Acres School.

3. Give examples of things you don't like about Lincoln Acres School.

4. What different alternatives would you like in Lincoln Acres School?
   - 2 or 3 grade levels in one space
   - 2 or 3 teachers working with same group of students
   - Partitions used to enclose space. How and what kind?
   - Other

5. What are the most important things for your child to learn in school? Please give specific examples.

6. How would you like your child's progress reported? Please give examples of what information and form.

7. Would you like to be involved in your child's education? If yes, please give five specific examples of how.
   - In school?
   - At home?
   - Other?

8. Do you believe your child has needs that cannot be met in open space? If yes, please give specific examples.

9. Please give examples of decisions that the following groups should properly make about school.
   - Board of Education
   - Administration
   - Teachers
   - Parents

10. Did you vote on the October 17, 1972 Bond Issue for Lincoln Acres School? If yes, how does your understanding of the present school set-up compare with your expectations when you voted?

Sam assumed the leadership of the meeting, and he carefully checked with everyone to see if writing a letter of protest to the Board was acceptable. No one objected. Gloom alternated with anger as the teachers discussed the recent events. Some proposed that they not do the survey, but others counseled that they were contractually obligated as Board employees to carry it out. Others argued that the interview was invalid, that if they were to conduct it, that fact itself would be an endorsement of it. Still others worried about the use the results would possibly be put to. Priscilla reflecting the mood of most teachers, said:

> I don't want to see anything from the survey in the newspapers -- it is their survey. None of the questions are of any value to me. I feel that I have been co-opted and coerced.

Yet others complained about the amount of negative publicity the school had already received in the local press; in their view the publicity and the survey were adversely affecting the morale of the staff. Sam said that he felt "lied to about open space" and Alan pointed out that the Board had already surveyed the teachers to find out if they wanted partitions and received a negative reply. Many teachers were disappointed because they had written a proposal for planning the school, wanted to begin work on the educational program and instead, found themselves conducting a survey of the community. Depressed and disgusted, the teachers left the meeting either to work in their teaching areas or begin surveying the families that had been randomly assigned to them the day before. Wanda, Priscilla and Dori volunteered to draft a letter to the Board; a faculty meeting was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. to discuss it.

The faculty's letter. Copies of the first draft of the letter to the Board of Education were distributed as the faculty assembled at 1:00. Sam chaired the meeting, since Ellis had not returned. Reactions to the letter were mainly positive. For instance, to Bert, the language appeared to be "a little strong," but he supported it, as did the others. After further discussion of the intent of the letter, changes were made in certain words and phrases.

In the final version of the letter the passage concerning the survey read as follows:

> The survey itself suggests that you (the Board) are considering reorganizing the school disregarding us, the teaching staff.... We feel that the Board has shirked its responsibility by not taking a definitive stand and by failing to support its staff. By conducting a survey at this time, you are continuing to generate dissent toward the proposed (school) organization.

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A difficult decision. More discussion of whether or not to conduct the survey followed. While many didn't want to do it, Bert was of the opinion that the Board could take punitive action against those who refused. It was an emotional meeting; at this point Priscilla cried and said, "I'm feeling that I really don't want to work here."

After a brief lull in the level of emotions, resentment against the Board, Biddle and Frisch continued to build. When Alan asked: "If we can't take a stand on this, how will we react when they say they want partitions?" Sam suggested that they brainstorm options. The following list of possible courses of action was contributed to by most teachers and written on a chalkboard by Sam.

1. Refuse survey
2. Do survey under protest
3. Foot-drag on survey
4. All quit
5. Job action -- no extra effort
6. Tell community our position
7. Do nothing -- go along
8. Sabotage or bias the survey
9. Write a letter to the Courier about our professionalism
10. Make opinions public at Board meeting

With this list, the meeting reached its emotional peak. Sam than made a suggestion that seemed oddly out of phase with the rebellious spirit that had pervaded the faculty since they had been informed of the survey.

He suggested the possibility of taking the partitions from the kindergarten and arranging them so they divided the instructional area into four equal-sized spaces. It would still be open space, he said, and "we would compromise; we would be the good guys." Priscilla agreed that it might satisfy many parents but Jeanne warned that "If they quiet down about open space then they might make an issue about multi-age grouping or something else." Sam concluded the short conversation by saying that acting on his suggestion would produce a Lincoln Acres spatial arrangement similar to the one at Oxford school and that Charles Frisch was moving toward this as a solution. Most of the faculty looked gloomy and somewhat shocked as Sam explained the possible compromise. They decided to end the meeting and resume it when Ellis arrived.

When Ellis arrived, he read the letter: Sam informed him of the events since he had left that morning. Ellis said of the letter:

> There are some things here that are not the Board's fault but mine. I used the staff, I wasn't asked to. I mistrust citizen interviewers. I wanted the teachers to interview so that the two could be contrasted. There was no time or access to get to the staff when the

> decisions were made. If that was wrong, I'm sorry. This involved technical grounds of the survey: it can be argued either way and I tried to minimize bias. Beyond that I guess that I sit with you on your reactions to various things. All these things have run through my mind too. We should include that we want a private meeting with the Board and it would be good to show them our anger. It seems to be the kind of Board that reacts to anger.

On Ellis' advice, the teachers decided to do the survey -- excepting those few who still found it totally unacceptable -- because the Board could punish teachers as well as himself on grounds of insubordination if they all refused. Ellis suggested that if they desired, after doing "the damn thing" they could file a grievance against the Board.

Shortly before the meeting adjourned, Sally asked Ellis if he thought that at some point they would have to compromise. Ellis answered:

> I don't know. I think in a period of two years we can move into a situation where we have a good school. The question with me is trust with the Board: are you going to lie to us, can we trust you?

That evening and the following day teachers surveyed the community, using the procedures that had been developed.

The next scheduled event of the summer workshop was the communications workshop starting on Monday, July 7, 1975.

B. The Communications Workshop

The Playboy Club, a modern luxury hotel in the rolling farmland of the southern part of the state, was the site of the communications workshop. Business at the hotel had not been especially good in the last few years, and it was rumored that the management, along with other interests in the state, was involved in efforts to have gambling legalized statewide. Playboy -- the magazine, and its enterprises -- was by this time a marginal feature of the hotel. Indeed, the only evidence of Playboy and its philosophy, beyond the hotel's name, was pictures of semi-clad females on the walls of the bar, and the tight-fitting "bunny" costumes of the restaurant waitresses.

Upon arrival at the hotel, because one carload of teachers took a wrong turn and was temporarily lost, Sam Pennington, who had organized and directed the communications workshop, gave the others free time.

The faculty took this opportunity to explore the hotel and use its facilities until after lunch, when the workshop actually began.38)

1. Workshop goals

In a large, sparsely-furnished meeting room on the ground floor of the hotel, Sam gave a brief overview of the aims and structure of the workshop. He set six goals for the two day session:

1. To increase awareness of communications processes
2. To increase communications skills through practice
3. To increase empathy among staff members
4. To increase ability to resolve interpersonal conflict within the staff
5. To foster a sense of mutual trust, support and safety within the staff
6. To enjoy ourselves

These goals along with a schedule of activities were on a mimeographed sheet contained in a folder Sam distributed to all participants. Also in the folder were several short articles titled: "Comments on

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38) The researcher's role during the communications workshop was substantially different than it had been at any other phase of the study; he participated actively, in all but one of the exercises. This shift was prompted by Sam's request that, because of an odd number of people attending the workshop, activities that called for pairs or trios might have to be supplemented with the researcher. Agreeing to this arrangement had several benefits: it enabled the researcher to experience the workshop to a greater extent in the ways other participants did; it provided an opportunity to maintain rapport with the faculty; and it eliminated what could have been an awkward set of circumstances for passive observation, the researcher's usual mode. At the same time, however, total participation created several problems. For one thing, the researcher's participation was less "real" than that of the teachers -- at least to the extent that he could not draw on experiences in the Washingtonville schools (he had been an elementary school teacher in an urban school, however). Along with this, his presence in small groups probably altered their behavior. Finally, not only did his participation in a specific group limit data collection from other groups, but because note-taking was difficult and inappropriate during the exercises, field notes were recorded only at the end of the workshop. Thus various activities and their products were not recorded in their entirety.

Listening," "Leveling with Others on the Job," and "The Case of the Hidden Agenda." Another mimeographed sheet titled "Feedback" accompanied the other materials. It provided suggestions for how to supply constructive feedback to others. For example, feedback should be: "helpful and informational, based on observable behavior, not generalities," "include strengths as well as weaknesses," and "should be given in a non-threatening way." Advice for receiving feedback was also supplied: feedback will be most helpful if "you are open, actively listening, and non-defensive," "you solicit specific examples to help you have a clear understanding of the feedback," and "you share your feelings about the feedback." A final comment was, "You make your own decisions about what, if any, changes you are going to make in your behavior."

2. The first day's activities

Sam formed groups of six, and explained that the first exercise was for each group to brainstorm and record on newsprint a list of hindrances to communication. After 15 minutes of fairly serious brainstorming, Sam asked the groups to form a circle, and have each member talk to the group in turn without any of the other five's responding. Following this, he distributed a small sheet of paper with these directions:

> Please answer the following questions as fully as possible:
>
> a. How did it feel to make a statement and have no one respond to it?
>
> b. How did it feel to ignore a statement made by others in the group?

Each question had adequate space under it for a written answer and the group members were requested to discuss their responses with each other. Sam then reassembled the large group, and he asked people to share the list of blocks to communication that they had brainstormed. These lists were combined and a piece of newsprint with the essential hindrances was put on the wall for reference throughout the workshop. Examples of hindrances were: poor listening abilities, lack of respect of others' opinions, and inability to express feelings. Generally, the teachers seemed to take the tasks seriously. The tone of the discussion was even, not animated or excited.

Sam then asked each person to select a partner and locate themselves in separate parts of the room. The first exercise was for one of the pair to tell the other an incident that had occurred in school; the other partner then paraphrased the story without comment from the person who told it. Following this, each partner gave the other three sentences for paraphrasing without comment from the sender. Finally, the instructions were to send a message, have it paraphrased, and then negotiate the meaning of the message.

Sam then distributed another feedback sheet. The questions were:

a. How did it feel to make a statement and have your partner paraphrase it?

b. How did it feel to paraphrase a statement made by your partner?

Along with these two questions, which were intended for written responses, Sam distributed the following "questions for discussion":

a. Did you find that you had any difficulty in listening to others during the exercise? If so, why?

b. Did you find that you were not getting across what you wanted to say?

c. What was your reaction to the paraphrasing of your partner? Was he/she receiving what you intended to say?

d. Was the manner of presenting by your partner affecting your listening ability? If so, in what way?

e. What were the differences in your feelings during the two types of experiences?

After discussion by the individual groups, Sam asked each group to report on its experience to the entire gathering. For the most part the groups had taken the tasks seriously and gave thoughtful, honest, reactions. However, groups seemed to feel a need to say something not already commented on by another group; this created a mild tension, and there was not much of a feeling that new insights into the communication process had developed.

In the next exercise, groups of four discussed a topic, then abruptly changed to another topic, another, and so on. The sheet distributed after this asked:

a. How did it feel having others change the subject right after your own statement?

b. How did it feel changing the subject right after others had made a statement?

Then, for the first time in the workshop, the faculty was asked to form groups with their teaching team members. Sam's instructions were for one member to talk to another, who would act as a sympathetic listener while the third person observed and then commented on the conversation. As in the other cases Sam distributed questions for discussion:

a. Did you always communicate what you intended to communicate?

b. Did you find the listener only responding to part of what you said?

c. Was it ever unclear what the speaker had in mind? What made it unclear?

At 4:30, a final discussion summarized blocks and hindrances to communication, and Sam said there was free time until supper at 7:00.

In this recreation period, several teachers played tennis, others took hikes around the hotel and the majority, including Ellis, played volley ball in the outdoor swimming pool. By this time most members of the faculty seemed to be fairly at ease with each other, and the opportunity to enjoy the facilities of the hotel -- a break in what several considered to be the artificiality of the exercises -- seemed to increase their familiarity with one another.

After a leisurely dinner in the Playboy Club -- the other restaurant in the hotel was closed -- the group met in the room they had occupied during the morning.

The only exercise of the evening was for each group of six to construct a self-standing, purposeful object with one moving part. This was to be fashioned from a Tinker Toy set, several balloons, drinking straws, pieces of wool, pipe cleaners and several pingpong balls. All but ten pieces had to be used. Sam announced that the products of the three groups would be voted on and the winning group awarded a prize.

The groups, which were pre-selected by Sam, set out to work after initial hesitation, some pondering and considerable joking. One group developed a machine that broke balloons which they called an "ego buster." Another group developed a gadget that looked like a windmill minus several critical parts. The third group's attempt was non-descript and considerably less elaborate than the products the other two groups had produced. When the construction finished, each group appointed a spokesman who humorously described the product to the others. Voting resulted in a tie; the windmill won on the second vote. Sam presented a prize, a large bottle of Bardolino wine, which, after hesitant swigs, was passed from person to person, with many of the older female teachers abstaining.

Informal discussion. The teachers' expectations of glamorous night life were not fulfilled, and about half of them found their way to the Playboy bar, since it was the only attraction besides television. After a restless wait for service, the group decided to go to a drugstore in the hotel for ice cream sodas. In the meantime, however, a discussion began between Sally and Sam about what several members of the group perceived to be Glenda's, Rebecca's and especially Norbert's, negative attitudes toward the workshop. As evidence of this, they noted that instead of sharing his reflections with the group Norbert had often said he would rather "pass" than comment. He also showed little enthusiasm for the Tinker Toy exercise -- he was a member of the group whose product was incomplete compared with the other two. Sam, concerned with these events, left to find Glenda, Rebecca and Norbert, and discuss the problems, if any, they were having.

In Sam's absence, the discussion of Norbert's reluctance to participate continued, led by Sally. The general tone of the conversation was that Norbert should have been able to adjust to this and other situations; several present had heard that he was upset because he thought the selection of the Playboy Club was improper and that he felt he should be at home with his wife and children. At one point in the discussion, Sally, reflecting the negative comments toward Norbert, said she would bring the matter to the attention of the entire group during the first session in the morning.

Sam returned and reported that he had talked with Glenda and Rebecca who said they were tired, and were watching television. Sam had also talked with Norbert, who told him that he did have some problems with staying at the Playboy Club as well as with the workshop in general. He did not want to discuss the problems at length with Sam, though; he would try to work them through, possibly with the group's help, the following day. According to Sam, Norbert also planned to watch television in his room for the remainder of the night. This information ended the discussion of problems with the workshop and the group talked about other, nonschool, topics.

Soon after, the group worked its way to Regina's room where Ellis, Sarah, Monica and Regina were playing bridge. With this interruption, the card game ended. By 1:00 a.m. all had retired for the night.

3. The second day's activities

The groups from the night before were reconstituted at 9:00 a.m. to discuss their products and the process they used to create them. Sam briefly described an evaluation scheme, and the groups, following these guidelines, put their comments on newsprint. As on previous occasions the groups were asked to share their comments with the others. All evaluations were positive: communication during the construction task had been good, and most felt that the task had been accomplished.

Although there was opportunity during this process to raise the issues discussed the night before concerning Norbert, Glenda and Rebecca's reactions to the workshop no one did.

The major part of the morning was spent in exercises meant to increase awareness of others. Sam asked pairs to do a variety of things:

stare at each other without saying anything, talk to the other person while he or she was continuously looking away, and sit back-to-back on the floor. Periodically, Sam asked for reports of these experiences to the entire group. In some instances it took a while for a volunteer to emerge; when one did the report was usually that the exercise was a useful learning device. After these exercises the group ate lunch and checked out of their rooms.

Lunch and other business finished, the group met for the final time in the meeting room. As an aid to evaluation of the experiences they had gone through, Sam gave a brief lecture on transactional analysis. Afterward, he asked teaching teams to form, away from other groups, to brainstorm "caring" and "uncaring" behaviors to the educational setting. Norbert dominated his group -- all intermediate teachers -- others, especially Alan, said they found his suggestions to be incisive. Reluctant to break with tradition, Sam had all groups report and discuss their lists.

4. Evaluation of the workshop

Before the group left for home, Sam distributed an evaluation form for the workshop which was to be returned to him the following day. Twelve of a possible total of 15 forms were returned to Sam. Below is a summary of the ratings and sample verbatim comments (Chart 6.2). Though Sam may have discussed the results with teachers, he did not make a final summary for them.

CHART 6.2

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL
COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please fill this evaluation sheet out at home and return it to me tomorrow. Please be honest, specific, and complete as only in this way can I learn to do a better job for you.[#]

For questions 1, 2, and 3 please use the following scale:

1 = excellent
2 = very good or for the most part
3 = so-so
4 = poor or not at all

[#] Note: If there is any way in which I can be of help to you on anything growing out of this workshop just ask. Thank you for your participation and evaluation.

Sam

(Chart 6.2 continued)

1. The degree to which the workshop achieved its overall aims. (1.7 N=12)*
   Comments:

2. The benefit of each of these activities:
   a. Mon. morning's warm up (no answers since not accomplished)
      Comments:

   b. Mon. afternoon's listening activities (1.4 N=12)
      Comments:

   c. Mon. evening's contest (2 N=12)
      Comments:

   d. Tues. morning's confrontation activities (2.2 N=9)
      Comments:

   e. Tues. afternoon's caring behaviors (1.9 N=12)
      Comments:

   f. Tues. afternoon's self planning and contracting (1.6 N=3)**
      Comments:

3. The value of the "lecturettes" (1.2 N=12)
   Comments:

4. What were the best things about the workshop?

   Getting to know each other better, working with different people, learning many new skills.

   The feelings of support and safety I felt with some staff members. Talking to some people I hadn't had a chance to talk to before. Listening and laughing.

   Doing and then reflection by group.

   Your planning and caring about all of us. You!

   "Construction," "back rub," sauna, pool, volleyball

   a) getting to know new people -- especially you and Jane
   b) the tight and very organized schedule
   c) your knowledge and concern as director

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*Mean, and number responding

** This exercise was not carried out.

(Chart 6.2 continued)

The opportunity to get to know the staff and to begin to communicate in a positive way -- establishing patterns which will be helpful in future interactions.

5. How could the workshop have been made better?

a) maybe a different setting -- made some people uptight
b) more focus on team functioning and processes
c) if Bert W. had just said he did not want to or feel comfortable coming and stayed home -- I felt angry about some of his actions.

Some role playing (simulation). Without letting participants know -- stage a "scene," i.e., two people start an argument. Leave room -- now participants discuss what they saw and heard -- "awareness and communication" skills.

One less work session. Some group recreation. We tended to lose each other during recreation period. A smaller setting might keep us more together.

I feel that after the workshop progressed and it became apparent that a person had strong negative feelings against certain aspects and then felt the need to constantly voice objections to the tasks, I think he should have been given the option to be excused rather than bring the group down by using a session as a stage for their own ego hang-ups.

An extra day to spread time -- too hectic -- no time to assimilate.

Timing seemed to be rushed -- have us work with more faculty people 1 to 1 -- work more with team members.

6. How would you like to see us follow up on the work we have done these two days?

Through informal social activities such as a barbecue or swim party, beach party. Perhaps we could do one communication activity per activity there by spacing them over the rest of the summer and into next year.

Continue support we've established for each other in valuable staff meetings.

I would like to see us take the time periodically (every month/two months?) to "review" in relation to whatever working relationships are in evidence at that time. In other words, continue to analyze how we are communicating in the actual work situation.

(Chart 6.2 continued)

Confrontation follow-up is needed but not "gripe sessions." I would like to see some role play situations.

7. Any other comments?

You were terrific, Sam. This was well conceived and expertly executed. The logistics were well handled and facilitated.

I felt that I learned a tremendous amount of information about the people I would be working with, most of whom are positive. I also found out that I can feel very comfortable with all but two members of the staff. Sam, I feel you made it possible for me to have this close feeling with the staff by your choice of activities for the workshop and all your planning.

I felt very comfortable during the two days. Positive feelings. I did feel at times you took either criticism or suggestions personally and I don't think they were said to get you upset. Shouldn't cater to those individuals who aren't interested. I think as a group we need to talk about what was really bugging a couple of people. To a point I feel we don't have a right to interfere but it did affect the outcome of some of our activities. But this is only one person's feelings. It just bothered me.

Extremely well planned workshop -- not only on the intellectual level but on the personal one as well. The leader set the tone for the caring behavior which was very much in evidence throughout the two days. I appreciate all the effort and thought that went into it.

Thank you for being a "caring," supportive person.

You did the best you could. Unfortunately the staff didn't have it "together" to get all they could out of it. By together I mean we haven't developed a tight community yet.

In a short statement Ellis wrote for placement in Sam's permanent file, he recounted the arrangements for the workshop Sam had made, and noted that:

> From the evaluation by the staff, the workshop was entirely successful and done on a level equal with that done by many professional consultants in the field.

With the exception of concern over "Norbert's problem," some discomfort over the location and assorted minor deficiencies, the faculty rated the workshop very highly. Sam's efforts and talents were praised, and almost all participants suggested that similar activities be conducted throughout the school year. Although there is reason to suspect that the evaluations may have been inflated -- the teachers' time investment, their ownership in the idea, and perhaps even their awareness of the fact that all their expenses had been paid probably increased the need to feel that something positive had been accomplished -- there were enough straightforwardly critical comments to lend credibility to the sincerity of what they wrote.

5. Commentary: what happened at the Playboy Club)

The communications workshop was held at a crisis point in the life of the emerging organization; it provided temporary shelter from the problems the school was facing. Removed from the location of the difficulties, held in facilities designed and equipped for leisure activities, it gave the faculty an opportunity to experience one another in a relaxed setting and become acquainted with new aspects of each other's personalities. Nearly twenty-four hours of contact contributed to increased familiarity. To some extent, then, the fact of being together out of school for an extended period had an effect on relations within the group; it worked as a salve and presented an opportunity for people to re-group, re-think and feel more positively toward the school. In fact, negative sentiments toward the community, Board of Education and superintendent did not re-surface during the workshop; what had appeared a bleak future a few days before, now seen from a distance, took on optimistic prospects. So an unintended outcome of the workshop was relief from the problems of the school.

The intended outcomes of the workshop were probably only partially accomplished. Glenda, who had first suggested the idea of a retreat, and her two teammates, Rebecca and Norbert, were accused by several others of not having participated fully in the group learning activities. Norbert, an older faculty member, was singled out as having been particularly reluctant to contribute. Although Sam took preliminary steps to solve the "problems" and Sally considered bringing them to the attention of the entire group, as did Norbert, in the end the difficulties were simply ignored. Other teachers found interpersonal relationships with Ellis awkward. For instance, Jeanne and Dori commented privately to each other that they felt tense when they were Ellis' partners in the non-verbal communications exercises. Jeanne was particularly uncomfortable because Ellis had asked her if she was avoiding him: in fact, she was.

These incidents are interesting in two respects. First, they mark the first semi-public acknowledgement of difficulties within the organization; until now all problems supposedly had external sources. These problems were semi-public because they were not openly shared with the entire faculty. Secondly, the incidents provide an insight into the effectiveness of the workshop, as well as into the dilemmas it created. Instead of using the complaints against others as occasions for "real" communications problems, the workshop continued with simulated communications exercises. Admittedly, using the actual problems would have involved risk: a minor problem could have become a serious crisis. Nonetheless, a situation that was likely to recur in the school situation was not confronted or used for instruction. Avoidance of the real communications problems that existed in the group -- among several faculty members and between the principal and faculty -- also made the exercises seem even more artificial. As it was, in the case of antagonism against Norbert and his team, the only contact between the two parties was through an intermediary. Face-to-face contact with the principal was avoided by some teachers, and -- understandably -- others did not tell him of their discomfort in his presence. To paraphrase an old saying: what was preached wasn't practiced.

But the ideal of open, trusting communication in the school was certainly not abandoned. Indeed, if the workshop accomplished nothing else, it legitimated open communication as an ideal: the purpose of the workshop was clearly to improve communications. The inability to reach this goal fully during the workshop -- a situation which Sam recognized -- was not important. But the formulation of the ideal as attainable -- though with much more work -- placed a strain on the system in the form of high expectations that could not be easily fulfilled. In fact, as discussed above, the primary source of strain during the workshop was that some members questioned the sincerity of effort others were making toward this goal.

The workshop had two other latent effects, ones presumably more beneficial for the organization. It demonstrated that faculty suggestions -- even expensive ones -- would be taken seriously. The idea of the workshop originated with a faculty member, and was approved by the principal and central administration, who provided funds for it. A closely-related effect was that the workshop probably increased each faculty member's personal investment in the new enterprise. Supplying time, energy, ideas and the willingness to examine habits, with the implicit promise of attempting to change them, required -- and probably deepened -- commitment to the role of being a teacher in a new, innovative school.

Finally, in the context of the conflict with the community, the decision to continue with the workshop, especially at the Playboy Club, puzzled -- even astonished -- the researcher at the time. It appeared to have been an avoidance or withdrawal from the problem, or a heedlessness of political realities. But, as has been pointed out above, a respite from the turmoil may have been just what the faculty needed. And though the action may be interpreted as inflexible, it can also be argued that the adherence to plans indicated self-confidence; Ellis and the faculty believed they controlled the situation with the community.

Later in the narrative we shall return to the communications workshop in an attempt to see what, if any, enduring effects it had on the faculty, and particularly the teaching teams. The fact that so little time was spent during the workshop in actual team meetings suggested that its intended effects on teams were minimal, and that little actual team-building would ensue.

6. Pornography and the politics of planning

Two days later, in the local weekly Courier, a front-page headline read: "L.A. School Staff Meets at Playboy Club." In the article, Biddle defended the selection of the Playboy Club as having been the best and most reasonably priced of the facilities available. He also supported the concept of a residential communications workshop as an aid in planning for the new school.

According to the article, several Board of Education members did not know about the Playboy Club workshop and would not have approved the site had they known. (School Board approval of workshops, however, is not necessary.) The article also described the Center for Policy Research study, which was correctly identified as the source for half the funds for the workshop; a Courier reporter had contacted the project director for information while the workshop was going on.

The article was stimulated by about 15 phone calls from Lincoln Acres residents to the editor, asking about the workshop; there were also several phone calls to Biddle complaining about the site. Beyond these, and the article itself, little public mention was made of the workshop, possibly because the major critics of the school were away on vacation. Only one letter to the editor appeared, from a resident of a rural community. After questioning Biddle's qualifications to be superintendent, it continued:

> Besides the obvious "fun and games" overtones, the trip to [the club] wasted gasoline and time, and it cost money. It doesn't matter that half of the cost came from federal money (after all, who contributes to the federal coffers? the Martians?), the fact is that this is another flagrant case of mis-spent taxpayers' money -- in a time when this latter commodity appears to be in very tight supply. This is a typical case of lack of good common sense and a total disregard for the taxpayer. Also rather typical of the Washingtonville school system.
>
> By the way, gang, how were the Bunnies?

Although it is difficult to determine how much damage selecting the Playboy Club did (if any) to the public image of the school, it probably did not serve to improve relations with Lincoln Acres parents or the Board of Education. More likely, it reinforced or created a suspicion that the faculty did not know what it was doing. To a semi-outsider --

the researcher -- it seemed at the time to have been a potentially serious public relations blunder, a strategic error at a sensitive time that could easily have been avoided either by finding another place (a Howard Johnson or Ramada Inn must have had vacant rooms), delaying it, or even cancelling it.

However, the reader may remember from the 1976 presidential campaign that even highly "professional" tacticians and strategists can take actions that seem at first glance incredible. Jimmy Carter's use of Playboy magazine as a vehicle for his ideas struck many observers at the time as either a tremendous blunder or an expedient way to gain votes from a particular sub-culture of the population. Given either of these interpretations, it was fairly widely agreed that the furor caused by the incident did not promote his chances for election; those who were not amused by or were indifferent to the interview were hostile toward it and to the Playboy context. Of course, Carter compounded the error by using profane language in the interview when he presented his views on extramarital sex.

All this illustrates at least two things: first, relatively long-range, well-thought out plans (Carter's) can experience some of the same pitfalls as do short-range, relatively improvised ones (Brown's). Secondly, in the United States, even people who admit to lust in the pages of a sexually-oriented magazine can become President -- and people tainted with two days at the Playboy Club can still remain the teachers of our most precious resource, America's youth.

C. The Board of Education's Response to the Faculty Letter

On Monday, July 7, 1975, while the faculty was working on the Tinker Toy construction task during the communications workshop, the Board of Education discussed and made public the letter the faculty had written the week before, complaining about the survey. School board member reaction was not favorable. According to the Courier, Estelle Hunter said:

> I am incensed. I really believe parents need a choice. The professionals are always espousing the need to stress individual differences, but it seems they're just paying lip service to the concept. If they recognize individual differences then they'll recognize the need for alternatives. I believed the survey was a chance to get input which might have offered alternatives. I am so angry with the staff. The utter gall. This is the most horrendous thing that has ever happened in this town.

Sylvia Peabody, a board member from Lincoln Acres, said that she too was upset by the tone of the letter. The Courier quoted her:

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> It was as if they were putting us on notice that if we did not do such and such they'll go elsewhere. I agree with their charge that the Board is shirking its responsibilities in not coming down hard and strong one way or the other. I don't feel because teachers don't like what we do we should do what the teachers demand. There are some excellent teachers with no jobs. I know them. Instead of getting my sympathy the letter brings a negative reaction. I'm a teacher and I know a good teacher can adjust to many situations. If a closed situation hampers their ability then perhaps they should find another job.

And the Courier quoted Gerrie Holden, a board member from one of the rural communities, as follows:

> I think they heard about the school board meeting last week and are running scared, feeling threatened. But I am not having a struggle with the community. I do not define listening to the community as struggling. They say it is an abhorrent manifestation of a breach of trust with them to conduct a survey. Well I do not consider listening as abhorrent. Sure the survey is invalid, if this is the attitude of those teachers helping to conduct it. I apologize to all those parents I called to arrange teas to hear Mr. Brown out, for now I do not believe he ever intended to listen.

Irena Farrell, the board president, sympathized with both the parents and teachers. The other two board members present remained silent on the issue. The Lincoln Acres parents present -- some of whom had participated in the survey -- were angry and surprised at the teachers' reactions to the survey.

Concerning the faculty request for a private meeting to discuss the school, the Board decided to have the meeting at the next session, but open to the public. As Sylvia Peabody viewed it: "This issue is not private. Sessions should be open, it's an open issue."

D. Faculty Planning Continues

1. Clarifying decision responsibilities

On the day after the communications workshop, the faculty resumed working in the school. Wednesday and Thursday were spent primarily in subcommittees, brainstorming lists of decision-making areas.39) Chart 6.3 is the brainstormed decision-making list produced by the subcommittee on teams.

CHART 6.3

BRAINSTORMED DECISION-MAKING AREAS FOR TEAMS

Intra-team
- a. rules for unit space
- b. sharing of materials and ideas
- c. responsibilities
  - scheduling
  - attendance, clerical, etc.
  - planning skills and activities
- d. referrals for special services
- e. conference (parent) planning
- f. grouping kids according to ability

Inter-team
- a. sharing material and ideas
- b. kids as a resource
- c. cooperative space arrangement
- d. meetings
- e. use of school facilities

Chart 6.4 is the brainstormed product of a subcommittee assigned to parent decision-making roles.

CHART 6.4

BRAINSTORMED DECISION-MAKING AREAS FOR PARENTS

Parents' decision in cooperation with staff:
- Retention
- Placement
- Enrichment or special activities
- PTA
- After-school use of facilities by kids
- Reports of progress
- Classroom participation
- Outdoor activities
- Fund raising

Parents not to be involved with:
- Time
- Space
- Methods
- Materials

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39) The faculty members also reacted on Wednesday to a short questionnaire from the researcher, asking about the goals they felt were most important for the school. These data are not presented here, since the teachers discussed the questionnaire little, and the data were not fed back. They will be discussed in Chapter IX, where we review goals and goal achievement.

Finally, Chart 6.5 presents Ellis' decision-making areas as he presented them to the faculty on Wednesday.

CHART 6.5

THE PRINCIPAL'S DECISION-MAKING AREAS

Administrative

- Hiring
- Management (material and funds)
- Shared evaluation
- Use of building and equipment
- Divide responsibilities among staff
- Meetings

Each of these lists was discussed by the entire group. Ellis acted as the manager and asked for suggestions or deletions to the lists. Several interesting suggestions were made when the principal's decision-making list was discussed. Priscilla asked if team members could share in hiring under the circumstance that a new member for their team was needed. Ellis said that they could and he added the word "shared" to hiring. Norbert suggested that Ellis add to his administrative list the responsibility of dealing with parent complaints; he didn't want parents coming in for a weekly session to "bitch, moan and groan" as some parents were prone to do. Norbert's recommendation was that the principal act as a filtering system, and accept information and communication from parents and the Board of Education, and pass on only what he considered important for teachers. Jeanne disagreed with the proposed function of information screening for the principal. It was her view that teachers should be included in all information, both positive and negative. Ellis concluded the discussion by saying that:

> What we're here to do is to find out what kind of things we can do -- and here is really a sort of middling course. Why don't we run it like the U.S. Post Office and the way they treat junk mail. You get one and then you let me know if you don't want to get any more of that kind of communication.

The consensus of the group was that this was a feasible way to handle parent communication.

It should be noted that these lists were preserved -- Ellis said he intended to bring a tape recorder to future meetings -- so that they could be developed into a "kind of reference document."

2. Teachers discuss the Courier articles

On Friday morning, eight teachers gathered in the faculty room and read the Courier articles about the Playboy Club and the letter they had written to the Board of Education. Several teachers were surprised by the articles. Sally, in particular, was worried about the possibility of being fired or not rehired the next year since she was non-tenured. Other teachers thought that it was unlikely that they would be retaliated against for the positions they had taken. Another thought that both articles were "sensationalistic": the headline should have been "Teachers Attend Communications Workshop", and the Playboy Club was of secondary importance, he said. Other staff members had no objections to the headline.

3. A furniture decision

During these days furniture had begun to arrive and was being put into place by the teachers and filled with supplies. For the most part, the building was still unorganized and fairly empty; the furniture had not yet been arranged in functional patterns.

While the teachers were meeting in small groups to brainstorm decision-making policies for the school, Dr. Biddle had a piece of furniture sent to the school; it was placed in Alan and Jeanne's teaching area. It was a twenty-foot-long waist-high workbench made of heavy, varnished wood; it had steel pipe legs, and a large piece of peg-board attached on top, which increased its height to about six feet.

After several inquiries from teachers about the new piece of furniture, Ellis called an impromptu faculty meeting. He explained that the furniture was designed by the superintendent and was his compromise between openness and walls; Biddle would like to see each team use 15 of them in their space, if they were willing. The teachers' immediate reaction was suggestions for modifying the workbench-wall. When Ellis was asked what he thought of it he demonstrated how easily it could be toppled over, claiming that many children in the school could do the same thing and that consequently it was unsafe.

Ellis communicated the faculty's dissatisfaction with the compromise piece of furniture to Biddle, and this scheme was abandoned.

4. The meeting with the Board

During this faculty meeting, Ellis introduced a discussion of the July 14 Board of Education meeting at which the Lincoln Acres faculty was to be given time to discuss their problems, but in public, not privately, as they had requested. He suggested that the staff not attend since there was no point in a public meeting and that he had already told the Board everything. He mentioned that at the session in which a closed meeting had been denied three board members were absent; in his opinion, if a vote were to be taken again with all Board members present, their request for a private meeting would be granted. In addition, he said it would not be necessary to attend because neither he nor any of the faculty had received an invitation. Thus his suggested strategy was to delay and hope for a more favorable ruling.

The meeting ended with an announcement by Sam that he had contacted the Washingtonville Education Association, the local teacher union, for advice on the problems with the Board. The association's opinion was that as soon as the Board of Education made a policy decision that in any way altered the original design of the school, the teachers had a grievance against them -- because they had been hired to teach in an open space school.

E. The Third Week of the Workshop: Conflict and Compromise

On Monday morning Ellis told the faculty that he would spend the next few days tabulating the results of the survey and asked for volunteers to help him; several teachers did so. He said that the work for the day was for teams to sort out "what should be done by groups and what by individuals," to add to the role descriptions for teachers and for teams which had already been produced. These discussions began. Later that morning a film of an open-space kindergarten was shown for those interested.

1. The Board looks at the survey results

Local flooding -- it had rained torrentially all weekend -- caused evacuation of the school at noon Monday and the cancellation of the Tuesday workshop. It also cancelled the Monday, July 14, Board meeting which was to have the public discussion of the Lincoln Acres school.

However, the Board did meet the following night and they re-voted on the issue of whether or not to have a closed meeting for the Lincoln Acres faculty. This time a private meeting was approved. Peabody, Holden and Hunter voted against it. Most of the 15 Lincoln Acres parents present were angered by the decision and argued that it was not a private matter. One parent supported the faculty, and suggested that the other Lincoln Acres residents at the meeting were "hung up on having partitions," a matter which he felt should be left to professionals to decide.

At this Board meeting Brown gave a preliminary report on the results of the community survey. The basis of the report was a random sample of 92 respondents from the 193 completed questionnaires. The findings of most interest were:

Do you believe your child has needs that cannot be met in open space?

No: 43%
Yes: 34%
Other responses: 24%

Did you vote on the October 17, 1972 referendum?

No: 53%
Yes: 43%
Other responses: 3%

How should partitions be used?

Some openness and some closedness: 37%
Closed off single classrooms: 18%
All open: 13%

What do you want your child to learn in school?

Basic skills: 67%
Learn how to learn: discipline: get along with others: 60%
He should work according to his own interests and abilities: 10%
Science: 10%
Physical education: 4%
Other responses: 14%

It is difficult to know what these results mean. One reason is that the day after the survey two Board of Education members had complained that the demographic data collected could be discriminatory. They asked the superintendent to have that page removed, which he did, over Brown's protest. Aside from randomly selecting questionnaires out of a pile, then, there was no way of controlling for biases through the use of data such as occupation or sex of the respondent. Also, the results were coded in such a way that the "other responses" category is large in many cases. Several response categories are unclear. Brown was aware of these limitations, and presented the data to the Board with the caution that it was not entirely clear what the results meant.

This presented a dilemma for the school board; they weren't certain what they should do with the findings. Sylvia Peabody, who had requested that the demographic information be removed, helped the Board resolve the question. In the public meeting she said: "Without a survey of all parents we can't use this to make a decision." The local newspaper, however, along with a report of the results of the survey and an article about the meeting in which they were presented, printed the headline: "Lincoln Acres School Survey Shows Parents Want Alternatives." It should be noted that during this period -- in fact just before the survey was to be conducted -- Charles Frisch, who had suggested the idea, was on a camping vacation with his family. Frisch, who conducted surveys as part of his position with the state department of education, commented upon his return that he thought the survey was poorly conducted.

2. Partitions: the conflict continues

When the discussion of the survey was over, the Board asked Brown to propose an alternative organizational plan for the school. Brown said that he already had alternatives in mind, and proposed placement of the library at one end of the instructional area to create an enclosed area on either side for a primary and an intermediate classroom. In the same plan, three sets of partitions would be used to "visually and psychologically" separate another primary and intermediate classroom. According to Brown, this plan would create six separate walled-off areas. He also announced that the first grade teachers were planning on beginning the year with a high degree of structure with the intention of increasing to openness gradually.

The proposed compromises did not satisfy many parents, who continued to object to 75 children with three teachers in a single classroom -- which was still a feature of the revised plan. After the meeting, Barbara Collins wrote a letter, signed by 32 other Lincoln Acres residents, to the state commissioner of education. The letter recounted the history of the school, including the walls promised in the bond issue literature (which was enclosed with the letter), Biddle's refusal to honor the bond specifications, community efforts to have the school changed (copies of the petitions were included) and community activities at Board of Education meetings. The letter -- which was also sent to local state assemblymen, the Washingtonville Board of Education, the state board of education and the public information office of HEW in Washington -- closed with the following appeal:

> At this point in time, less than two months before the opening of school, the partitions we were supposed to have are not and, we fear, will not be forthcoming unless you, Commissioner Harris, help us.
>
> We beseech you for help!
>
> What else can we do to prove our total dissatisfaction for the present "airport hanger" concept forced upon our children as the sole learning environment available to them?

Later in the week the Washingtonville Courier, which seldom took strong stands on local issues, had an editorial titled: "Board Credibility Fades with Private Meeting." In its view:

> This week school board members forged another wedge between themselves and an already disenchanted public.
>
> ***
>
> In 1972 when a $3 million bond referendum was passed to build additions to other schools and to build the $1.5 million Lincoln Acres School, literature promoting the referendum promised floor to ceiling partitions in the school. Now the superintendent says the district hasn't the $15,000 it would take to buy such partitions, and the teachers will decide what, if any, partitions they will need.
>
> At school board meeting after meeting only school board members Gerrie Holden, Estelle Hunter and Sylvia Peabody have said they favor offering an alternative. Others have hedged on deciding whether or not to demand partitions as promised.
>
> ***

3. The faculty continues planning

When the workshop resumed on Wednesday morning, the faculty met with Ellis at 9:00 a.m., as had been their custom. He told them that the Board had met last night and approved a private meeting with the faculty for the following Monday night. He urged all teachers to attend and then continued:

> It seems as though we should bring a compromise proposal with us. They are afraid that some dimwit will submit a proposal and have it passed. They have been having trouble getting a quorum. We can design a proposal tomorrow and submit it Monday night.

He then asked that the faculty meet again at 1:00 p.m. to work on objective writing. After this he left for a district-wide administrative meeting at which, among other topics, a key one was the distribution of secretarial time during the year. Ellis wanted to get as much clerical aid as possible for the school.

More furniture arrived, and the rest of the morning was spent arranging it and working on other aspects of the teaching spaces. The furniture was constructed without wheels and drawers, contrary to their requests and the teachers complained privately about it.

Sarah Fox, a resident of Allwood Green, told several others that a parent had telephoned her the night before and asked if the teachers were going to the next board meeting. Sarah assured that they were; the woman told her that she would bring several parents to the meeting who supported them. The teachers were relieved to hear that there was some community support for their position.

That afternoon the group met again and discussed objectives lists. Sam summarized which objectives lists had been produced (reading, math and part of science) and Ellis tried to get a sense from the group of how much objective writing could be accomplished by the end of the workshop. After considerable discussion, it was decided to work on recordkeeping July 17 and social and emotional objectives on July 21. Ellis then answered questions concerning the furniture. After the meeting teachers continued to work on arranging their teaching areas.

4. The faculty compromise meeting

By 9:15 the following morning (July 17) the faculty had assembled in the instructional area to begin discussing possible compromise proposals. Ellis explained:

> I've talked to a number of people on the Board privately and they are willing to accept a proposal for a compromise. There is a solid bloc against us that attends the meetings regularly. There is some concern that one of them, or another community person, would propose something that can be voted on right away. This Monday night we should be able to get a proposal accepted. This is two months too late; it takes time out of planning.

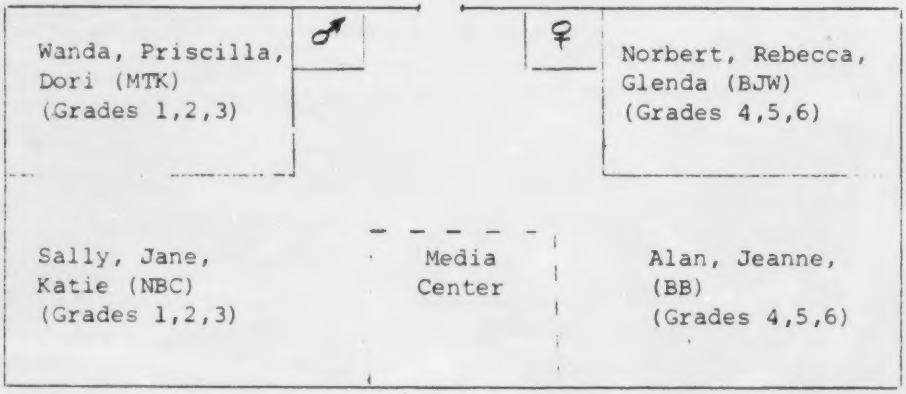
After questions concerning money for the partitions and if the school could physically have closed classrooms, Ellis went to a chalkboard and drew the diagram that appears on the next page.

The immediate faculty reaction was complaints about reduction in teaching space, especially by two groups (MTK and NBC) which had planned to have large areas without any furniture. The discussion, which was tense, continued as follows:

> Jeanne: When these pods enclose us, will it be total, floor to ceiling?
>
> Ellis: I'd like to treat that as a topic separately but next.
>
> Rebecca: I don't like it. (Some murmurs among the teachers)
>
> Regina: Will this plan be acceptable?
>
> Ellis: I think so. I've gotten assurances from three board members.
>
> Regina: We will change the walls but not the educational program?

DIAGRAM II 40)

PRINCIPAL'S PROPOSAL FOR PARTITIONS *


♂
♀
Wanda, Priscilla,
Dori (MTK)
(Grades 1,2,3)
Norbert, Rebecca,
Glenda (BJW)
(Grades 4,5,6)
Sally, Jane,
Katie (NBC)
(Grades 1,2,3)
Media
Center
Alan, Jeanne,
(BB)
(Grades 4,5,6)

*Solid lines are partitions.
Dotted lines are the boundaries of the media center.
Note that the kindergarten area is not shown: it is located to the left of the primary (1,2,3) groups.

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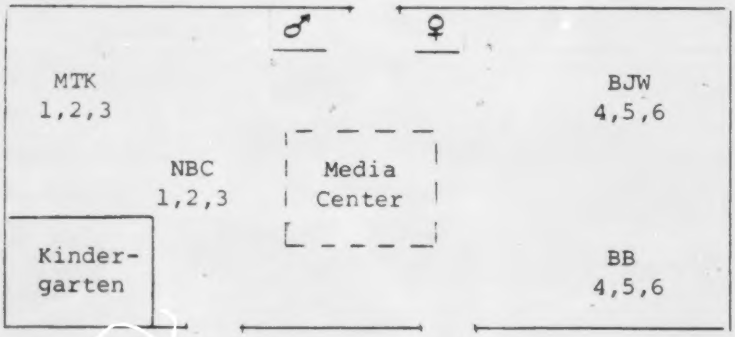
40) This diagram omits the kindergarten area, already closed off by partitions, and does not show the MTK area accurately (see simplified diagram below). However, it communicates Ellis' message accurately enough for his purposes: he wanted a partitioning plan that would satisfy the community and be acceptable to the teachers.

ACTUAL SITUATION PRIOR TO DIAGRAM II#


♂
♀
MTK
1,2,3
BJW
4,5,6
NBC
1,2,3
Media
Center
Kinder-
garten
BB
4,5,6

# Furniture not shown.

(Ellis nodded "yes")

Priscilla: I'd like to be firm with the Board. (The others agreed.)

Sarah: What about the survey? Are we taking account of the findings?

Ellis: Team teaching was good. There was concern about multi-age grouping, walls. The concern is mainly in the primary grades.

Dori: A lot of this seems firm. Unless I was naive I didn't think all these decisions were made.

Ellis: They haven't been made. It's a plain harsh political reality. Last meeting left people angry. Some tried to say we couldn't have a private meeting with the Board, our employers. Some didn't like my finagling. There is talk of getting self-contained classrooms by the use of pickets, boycotts and lawsuits. I'd like to avoid this by making some changes. At least the psychological impression of change.

Alternative plans were offered, such as suggesting that parents who didn't like the school could have their children attend other schools in the district, and using folding walls with large doors in them, rather than partitions. About half of the teachers continued to complain about losing teaching space, and opposed the idea of a compromise. Ellis then said: "Do we want to let this sit? I feel that it's a bad time to ask for a consensus." The group silently agreed. Ellis suggested that they go back to their teaching areas, try to visualize the changes and meet at 12:30 for further discussion. Almost as an afterthought, he asked the primary group to meet with him immediately.

Ellis adds a compromise feature. Sitting on the floor in the instructional area, Ellis and the two primary teams (Dori, Priscilla and Wanda; Sally, Jane and Katie) discussed the compromise. The meeting began with the following conversation.

Dori: Don't you think we got the shaft?

Ellis: No. You have to keep it in perspective. We're two or three years ahead of the district and way ahead of the rest of the state. From what I've seen this state is backward.

Dori: Can you see us moving out of it in a few years?

Ellis: I don't see any Board member -- even the most committed -- keeping us as we are. We don't have a

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> contract with them for partitions. Even after only one year with a fairly low profile can let us go our way. In a way you're buying a lot of valuable time. After this year a lot can happen. The Board has accepted open space within a pod. I'm not saying what you should do but think about going to a 1-2 and a 2-3 pod.[41] Think about what this would do proportionately. The numbers are good for that. It has other problems, materials is one.

Somewhat disoriented by Ellis' suggestion, the conversation flitted from topic to topic: Board members, time problems that the suggestion would create, and statements of doubt about the need for compromise. Two teachers voiced strong preference for retaining the original plan. However, more discussion followed including strategies to use at the Board meeting on Monday, and the possible alternatives were thoroughly debated. With the teachers still uncertain as to what they wanted to do, Ellis suggested that they talk about it for 45 minutes and then meet with him again. He left.

Near tears, Sally said, "I feel like crying." Jane, her team member, sighed and said, "I don't believe this." The others were equally unhappy with the events of the morning.

Without Ellis, the primary teachers moved to the faculty room and continued discussing the proposed change in plans. Disappointed and depressed, they had difficulty in reaching a decision; in a somewhat unorganized way they re-examined the problem from a variety of perspectives. Among other issues, they debated at length whether or not to attempt to follow the results of the community survey. After agreeing that the survey had been poorly conducted, and that many parent responses demonstrated ignorance of educational practices, only Priscilla wanted the results to be followed. Her reasoning was, "I really have problems asking the community what they want and then completely ignoring them."

On one area there did appear to be consensus: Priscilla voiced it: "I don't think Ellis was telling us what to do, only telling us what was best." Debate continued, and there was little movement toward a decision. Eventually, after Dori made a suggestion to flip a coin to make the decision, Sally suggested that Ellis be asked to answer questions they had raised.

The primary group accepts reluctantly. Ellis arrived and was immediately asked if proposals other than splitting the grades, such as only having walls, would be acceptable. He said that in his opinion it would not be, since a small group of parents, led by Rob Goldman, had objected to having three grades in the same primary classroom.

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[41] The significance of this proposed change is that instead of having two primary teams with grades 1,2,3 in each team there would now be one primary team with grades 1 and 2, and another primary team with grades 2 and 3.

This appraisal prompted Wanda and others to devise elaborate schemes that would, in effect, leave the original plans intact. But they were quickly abandoned because of a falseness about them that the group sensed would be easily detected. After more questions, the group acceded to the subtle pressures from Ellis; members of the group who had minor objections to the compromise said that they would accept it with reservations. The remaining teachers then gradually changed their minds. It was clearly not their preference and they offered rationales: "We can teach with any set-up;" "We're doing it because of parent pressure, but it's against our judgement." Overarching these rationalizations was the hope that within a year the original plan could be restored.

Emotionally upset -- Wanda left the room in tears -- even after the decision was made, the teachers continued to question Ellis about the wisdom of the compromise.

> Katie: I'm afraid we may be lousing things up that we haven't thought about. The Board might be, too.
>
> Ellis: Yes, they know. The other side wants 18 classrooms or some other self-contained arrangement. I think the presentation that could be made is that we are doing incremental change, for the change to take place with input from the community and professional guidance. I think they could buy that easily because that's something in the future and they always sell their future easily -- that's why we're in trouble now.
>
> Priscilla: I would be content if we could stave off a decision forcing us to do something.
>
> Ellis: I think the quieter you make the first year the better you can do the next year. You need to gain and build trust. The more trust you build now the more you can do later.

Ellis left, and the teachers remained to decide which of them would teach the 1-2 and which the 2-3. Sally polled the group: with the exception of Dori, who wanted to teach a 2-3, and Katie, who wanted to teach a 1-2, the others claimed they had no preference. Several reiterated that they were not satisfied with the compromise and would still like to have all three grades in both classrooms. On the question of whether the teams should remain intact or be re-formed there was unanimous agreement that they should retain the same personnel. Indeed, several preferred that the teams remain intact even if it meant they would not be teaching the grades that they desired.

Despite statements of trust in Ellis' political judgement by some, others continued to question the need for the compromise. They suggested that the community be informed that from an educational and professional standpoint what they wanted was unsound. All of the teachers approved of this but the majority sensed that it was an unlikely course of action.

After more attempts to decide which team would teach which grade -- including a proposal that they draw straws -- they requested help from Ellis again. He happened to walk into the room at the time, and after Wanda explained the problem he suggested that maybe the solution would be to break up teams. This was quickly put aside as undesirable by the teachers. Upon still further discussion, Ellis recommended that the issue be put aside for the present time. Sally then asked:

> Sally: What position should be taken in the Board meeting?
>
> Ellis: I haven't heard any movement away from the 1-2, 2-3. The only problems are with who does it. Is the process O.K.?
>
> Sally: We're leaving with what?
>
> Ellis: 1-2, 2-3 and tell them we have a realignment problem.
>
> Dori: I'm not sold on it. It's only fair for me to say so.
>
> Ellis: None of us are.

With this conversation the primary group meeting ended. Still disgruntled, they joined the rest of the faculty in the instructional area to discuss the compromise.

The whole faculty meets. The meeting began as Ellis reported to the faculty that he had met with the primary group, and with Norbert, Glenda and Rebecca. He announced that Glenda, Norbert and Rebecca had agreed to take a reduction in square footage in order to keep their unique space. (This group had earlier spent over an hour working with the floor plan of the school and a calculator to find ways to save an area of their teaching space that they had planned to have without furniture.)

Some teachers felt that in the process of saving the intermediate teams' space their own teaching space was made less accessible and traffic through their areas would be increased. Norbert, annoyed by the charges, paced off the area that his team had proposed. This demonstration seemed to settle the major issues in the dispute. Other suggestions, such as moving the location of the media center, were made. These were unacceptable, because as Ellis pointed out, difficulty in access to fire exits and other substantial traffic flow problems would result.

With the faculty depressed, many cursing frequently and on the verge of tears, Ellis ended the meeting by announcing that they would meet again Monday, when he would have a draft of the compromise proposal that could still be altered. As the faculty got up to leave, Glenda's laconic commentary on the compromise captured their mood: "Shit!" she said.

5. Finalizing the compromise

On Friday the final detail of the proposed compromise -- which team would teach which primary grades -- was settled. Ellis suggested that since Priscilla Talbot had more experience with first grade than the others, her team should have the 1-2. Dori Kraus was not in school when the proposal was made, and Katie, who had wanted to teach the 1-2, reluctantly accepted. In Wanda's opinion, it would have been difficult for either Dori or Katie not to follow Ellis' suggestion: "When the principal says something like that you can't ignore it, you better do it." To the teachers then, Ellis' "suggestion" was regarded as a decision.

On Monday morning, the meeting to discuss the compromise was postponed until the afternoon, because Ellis had to attend a principals' meeting. Sam proposed that they work on affective objectives instead. After some debate, however, it was decided that psychologists had already formulated excellent lists of affective behaviors and that it would be more useful to work on social studies skills. The entire faculty sat in a large circle and brainstormed social studies objectives for the remainder of the morning. For example, a list of "map skills" included that the student be able to identify the continents, understand longitude and latitude and develop a grasp of distance.

The mood of the faculty this morning was lighthearted. When they mentioned the Board meeting to be held that night they did it in a joking -- somewhat sarcastic -- way and showed no apparent sign of the tensions of the week before.

Deciding. Ellis began the 1:00 p.m. meeting explaining:

> I tried to come up this weekend with a statement that puts down the compromise we agreed on and some areas that were discussed but not agreed on. I think we have a plan that meets the needs of the kids as best we can in the circumstances. What we want is a commitment to this proposal that will let us expand later on. There are three points: (1) re-subdivision of space, it remedies the Kindergarten situation. I worked at it and think it's O.K. It's the best I could do. (2) Change to a 1-2, 2-3. (3) Retooling -- specific costs of putting in partitions and of getting more materials.

He distributed copies of the proposal to the faculty, and asked them to read and comment on it. The few overall reactions complimented Ellis on the tone of the document and especially his clear statement that in their professional judgement the faculty did not think the compromise was the best educational plan for the school. Except for a question about whether money would be available to purchase the partitions needed for the compromise, all questions concerned strategies toward the Board of Education and ways of responding to questions teachers might be asked at the meeting. The major strategic issue to most teachers was whether or not a clear, definitive answer was to be expected from the Board that evening. Ellis said that it was his intention to get an immediate response. His advice on how to reply to the Board was that they should avoid engaging in debate. He added:

> One thing I have told the Board is that the kids will recognize this as a familiar school. Change will be incremental from then, and that we haven't excluded any of our options here. They identified with things like noise. Theory and conceptual structure is beyond them.

Part of the strategy was to have as many teachers as possible attend the meeting. Additionally, Ellis announced that he had contacted numerous parents and received assurances that they would support the teachers at the meeting. When asked if the meeting would be private (only the faculty and Board members present), Brown elaborated on some of the strategizing he had done. He said:

> I have talked with Irena (Board president) about that. Sylvia Peabody talks to the press about all private matters -- the press would then get the news from Sylvia Peabody, not us. What I would like to see is a public meeting with the public not able to speak and then have the staff leave if there is any other business. I don't want you to be hassled afterward by parents. If that happens you can send them to me and I'll talk to them.

Lastly, Ellis informed the teachers that their attendance at the Board meeting was semi-imperative: "It's in our best interest." To encourage teacher attendance, the workshop ended earlier than usual.

The compromise plan. The plan for reorganization of the school presented to the Board of Education had a strident tone. Along with the changes to be made and the rationale behind them, it included passages like this:

> While the plan presented below is a sweeping change of the previous operating plans for Lincoln Acres School, our confidence in the original plan's worth

> as a process for providing the optimum learning among the children of Lincoln Acres remains firm. It clearly capitalizes on the successes in organizational design both locally and in elementary schools throughout our culture: it strategically exploits the depth and breadth of each professional's expertise; it anticipates the individual and collective needs of children and parents of Lincoln Acres with remarkable sensitivity. We do not expect to lose these beliefs ever.
>
> Nevertheless, our former plans for operation are now swept aside, because we want to be responsive to an aroused community and a concerned Board of Education. In order to respond, we have had to reassess our resources to determine how far from our former... optimal...organization we can go and still provide excellent professional service to Lincoln Acres' young people. We find we are able to be very flexible, which, coordinated with a little flexibility on the parts of the Board of Education and Lincoln Acres parents, will lead to a healthy and, we hope, noteworthy learning experience for the children.

Four reasons for the inappropriateness of self-contained classrooms were then provided in detail. Briefly, these were: (1) they were not clearly supported by the community; (2) construction of many walls by September would be impossible; (3) the number of self-contained classrooms required was unknown; (4) all furniture and walls would have to be removed from the building anyway at the end of the year for repair of the floor. The text continues:

> In addition to the above reasons, a change to self-contained classrooms would result in a disorganized, poorly-prepared opening of school in September, because it would shatter all plans made (primarily during voluntarily donated time of teachers) for the past half year. Great demoralization on the part of staff members would inevitably result.
>
> ***
>
> Fortunately, there remains the option of self-contained teams. This gives substantial closedness beyond the present plan, yet allows for the team-teaching so strongly advocated both by the staff and the respondents to the survey.

After presenting a floor plan with the proposed changes (See Diagram III), and the cost of the changes, the alterations in the primary grades were explained. It was repeated several times that the faculty did not think that the changes are necessary and that they have caused problems. For example:

> Words are not adequate to estimate the human cost of this change.

Multi-age grouping, according to the proposal, was not a problem in the 4,5,6 grades and would remain in the plan.

The reorganization proposal ended with a strong statement about the desired future relationship between the faculty and community:

> The above proposal is made by the Lincoln Acres School in wholehearted desire for a peaceful, trustful rapport with the Board of Education and the Lincoln Acres community. The statement hardly measures the extent of change the staff has undergone; still, we hope some small portion of the flexibility in professional practice and sensitivity to our constituents comes through here. With matching flexibility and sensitivity from Lincoln Acres parents and the Board of Education, this proposal can be adopted, implemented and patiently allowed to bring forth its great potential for learning in the children of Lincoln Acres.

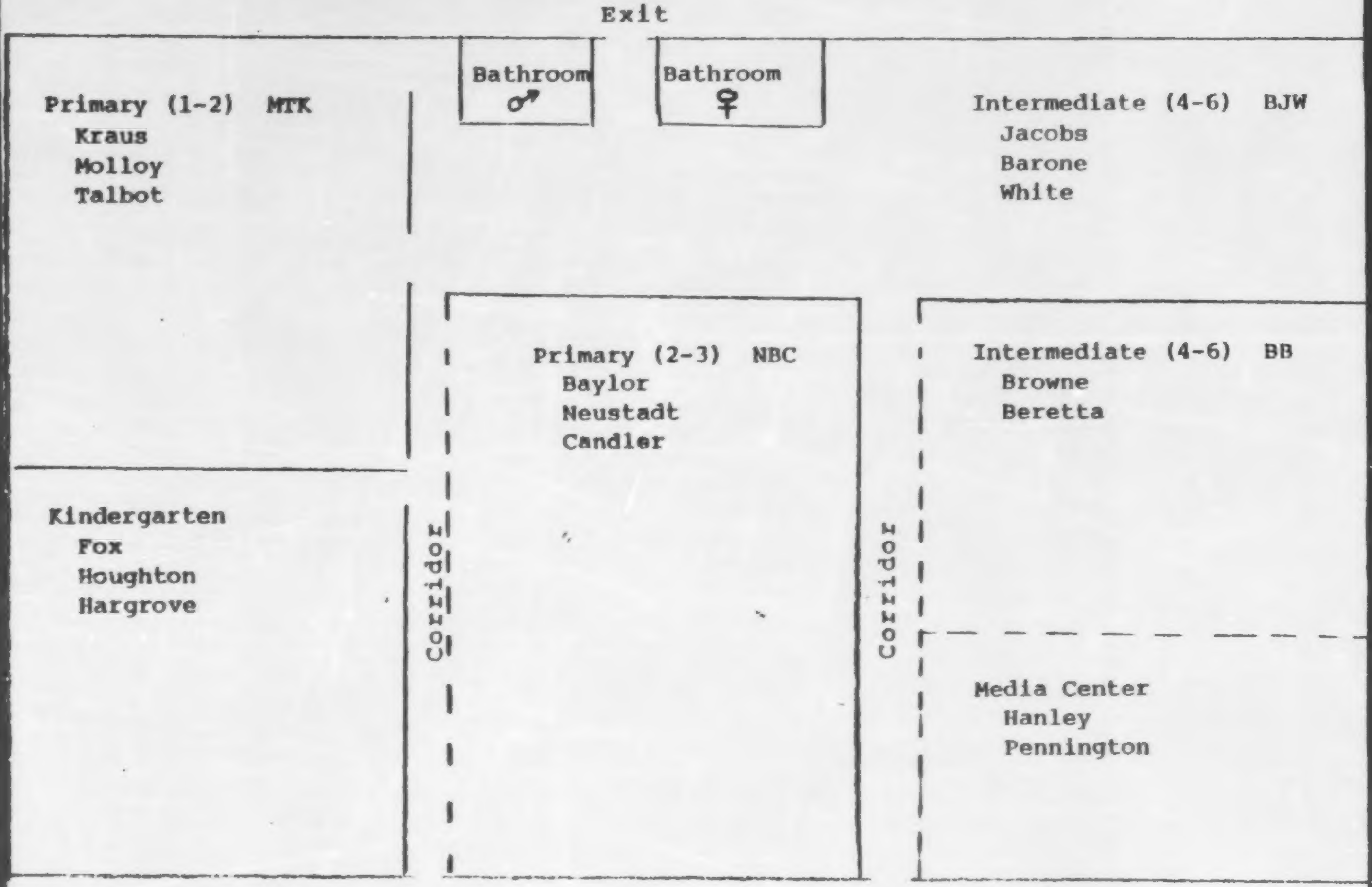
6. Reaching a decision on reorganization

That evening the faculty, Board of Education and forty Lincoln Acres residents -- including several organizers of the protest groups -- met in the library of Valley School to discuss the reorganization of Lincoln Acres school. Irena Farrell, the Board president, announced that the first part of the meeting was private and asked the public to leave. During the ten-minute private meeting, Brown asked the Board what decisions would be made by them and which ones by the faculty. Responses to his questions surfaced a lack of agreement on what the decision-making or policy-setting role of the Board was; some members wanted to take an active role in reorganizing the school, while others thought it was an internal school matter that never should have been brought to the Board. With a vague assurance that the faculty's questions would be answered before the night was over, the public was permitted to return to the meeting. Throughout the private meeting Biddle sat silently in his usual position at the center of the Board.

Board president Farrell briefly explained the rules that would govern the public's right to speak: they would be allowed a thirty-minute period with a limitation of three minutes for each speaker recognized by the chair. Since the proposal was not distributed to the public, Brown read the entire reorganization plan aloud.

DIAGRAM III

Proposed Lincoln Acres School Reorganization--July 21, 1976


Exit
Bathroom ♂
Bathroom ♀
Primary (1-2) MTK
Kraus
Molloy
Talbot
Intermediate (4-6) BJW
Jacobs
Barone
White
Primary (2-3) NBC
Baylor
Neustadt
Candler
Intermediate (4-6) BB
Browne
Beretta
Kindergarten
Fox
Houghton
Hargrove
Corridor
Corridor
Media Center
Hanley
Pennington

Solid Lines = partitions.
Dotted lines = furniture

Questioning of the faculty by the Board members followed. The first area of concern was the kindergarten. Since there were no walls between the two kindergarten areas, several Board members wanted to know how they would be separated. Alice Houghton explained that furniture would be used. Peabody then questioned the entire proposal:

> The comment was made that this plan would limit the educational opportunities of the children. Are you saying that the other schools in the district are not doing a good job? Every other school in the district has small spaces and seem to have quite a few activities going on. Why is this plan limiting?

Ellis and then Sam answered that the original plan would permit flexible use of the space. They claimed that even demountable partitions would limit space use. Ellis finally commented:

> I think your understanding is a little off. The change is not a handicap but it is not what we would have chosen or what we have planned for. It is not our implication that this is bad.

Peabody responded that the staff was excellent, but she wanted to know why they had not considered starting off gradually instead of having entirely open space at the beginning. This query brought varied reactions from the faculty. Jeanne argued that walls were not the issue as much as the discussion of walls, which had become detrimental to the planning of the school. Norbert, in a long, emotional speech, listed the advantages of open space and team teaching. From his perspective, the chief advantage was the opportunity to work in close contact with other teachers who could provide support, professional criticism and advice. Peabody's reply was:

> What you're saying is all well and good. I'm not getting at that. There seems to be some stigma attached to small classes. The kids in that class may be as good as one in an open space class.

Ellis and several faculty members denied that stigma was to be attached to children in self-contained classrooms. At this point Biddle entered the discussion, and asked Sam to describe his experiences as an open space teacher. Pennington again emphasized flexibility and the ability to meet each child's needs. Biddle then asked: "What can you do in an open space that you can't in a closed classroom?" Teachers answered that in an open classroom quiet children were less likely to be neglected because three teachers were present, and that sharing increased among students and faculty. Peabody reiterated that parents didn't want to eliminate open education entirely, but wanted an alternative to it. Farrell interrupted the discussion and asked that the Board consider the plan.

Board members compared the reorganization plan with features of other schools, asking if Oxford school offered alternatives to a 4,5,6. They disagreed among themselves over whether it did. In his response to this and other questions, Brown used the phrase, "incremental change" to describe what the faculty of Lincoln Acres school was going to attempt.

At this point, Gerrie Holden, who had not yet spoken, asked:

> Holden: In the reorganization you're not implying that you are offering alternatives?
>
> Brown: What do you mean by alternatives?
>
> Holden: (Laughing) What the parents want. Really, I don't see the point because you haven't changed anything, the methodology is the same and so are the techniques (the teachers collectively groaned).
>
> Brown: What do you mean by technique?
>
> Holden: I can't see that you have changed anything.
>
> Glenda: It has entirely changed -- we put up partitions.
>
> Holden: But that doesn't really change anything.
>
> Jeanne: I thought the issue was walls, not our teaching technique. I thought walls were what was being attacked.
>
> Holden: I don't think so.

Grace Walters, a liberal Board member, then changed the subject and asked Ellis to describe the growth of a normal student in the school, with emphasis on who would be accountable for that student. He did.

After this Harvey Stieglitz, another Board member with a reputation as being liberal, made the following statement:

> I think that the staff has gone out of their way to meet community demands. I am aware that they haven't created self-contained classrooms. I'm aware that they wanted an open space school. I'm also aware of the skills and high quality of the staff. I join with Bob Klahr who last week, even before the compromise, said we should give this plan a chance. I realize the staff made a big compromise. I say give it a chance.

Walters then supported Stieglitz's statement. Klahr also agreed with Stieglitz, but raised the key question: how had the bond issue promise of 18 classrooms evolved into an open space school? Biddle gave the following response:

> I wish I could remember four years back. I wish the architect hadn't put in the partitions pictured the way he did in the pamphlet. Grace Walters touched on part of the evolution. Four years ago we didn't have staff prepared for open space. My philosophy has been to allow teachers to work in the situation which they want. I have complete faith in the teachers. I think that the staff has made a tremendous compromise. If they are comfortable with it I support them, if not, I also support them.

Peabody repeated her view that alternatives to open space be provided. The public was then allowed to comment.

Parent response was different in this meeting than in those that preceded it. Perhaps the most significant change was that several parents -- none representing an organized group -- actively supported the teachers. In all cases, they argued that the professionals should be permitted to do what they considered to be good educational practice. Several other parents, such as Rob Goldman, viewed the reorganization proposal as having satisfied their demands and asked for a spirit of co-operation between faculty and parents. Others, Sam Schwartz, for example, analyzed the situation differently.

> We have a school that's about to open. We have teachers that we didn't at the time of the bond issue. We have a school to open. I'm not pleased with what's on the board but I think it is a big compromise for people who want airplane hangars. I'm annoyed with the Board and parents -- They've been obnoxious -- so have the teachers -- I've seen their letter. We should try to cooperate.

Yet others argued that to keep the democratic system from deteriorating further, the bond issue should still be fully honored. Barbara Collins was among these.

Generally, although some parents were still deeply dissatisfied with the compromise, opposition to the school seemed to be considerably decreased. The predominant community attitude turned to one of pleas for cooperation, tinged with a "we'll wait-and-see" posture.

Once the 30 minutes of public comment were over, Hunter reported the results of the analysis of the community survey data which she and Peabody had carried out. She began by accusing Brown of having biased the results he presented to the Board because he used predominantly teacher-conducted interviews which, according to her findings, were more favorable to open space than those interviews conducted by parents. She had also discovered that 94 of the surveys contained demographic data even though Biddle had ordered it removed. Despite these charges, the

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findings she presented were not significantly different than those presented by Brown. What did differ was the interpretation: Hunter and Peabody concluded that most parents wanted alternatives to open space. The discussion -- mainly charges and counter-charges -- that followed the presentation of the survey findings was so confusing that Sam Schwartz commented publicly: "It sounds like a morass. You can't take little pieces from a survey and form a conclusion."

Farrell then asked if the Board were ready to make a decision. Peabody, who until now had let Hunter present the survey results, said that she and Hunter had developed alternative plans based on the results of the survey. The proposals were fairly elaborate, complex schemes that would limit grades to two levels in each classroom, and also provide at least one self-contained classroom for each grade. As strategized earlier in the day by the teachers, Brown's response to these alternatives was that the staff would need a considerable amount of time to consider them; he reiterated that they were hoping to receive a decision that evening.

Holden requested that the alternatives formulated by Peabody and Hunter be considered. The other Board members restated their positions, and suggested that a consensus of the Board or a vote42) be taken. More debate followed, until Holden, sensing defeat,and unhappy with the compromise, asked that: "the Board take a vote on the original plan, because it costs $10,000 less and seems to me to be the same." Stieglitz's response was: "I would not like to do that because I think the staff has worked hard on the compromise and it shouldn't just be put aside." Farrell then asked if there were other comments (there were none), announced her support of the faculty compromise, and then asked for a vote on it. The vote was five in favor and three (Holden, Peabody and Hunter), against. The absent Board member was Charles Frisch, still on vacation.

Afterward. After the meeting Biddle told one of the teachers that he was surprised they hadn't demanded the original plan; in his opinion, if they had they probably would have retained it. Most teachers were relieved that the issue had finally been resolved; they now knew what type of school to plan for the opening in September.

Later that week, under the top right front page headline: "Parents win Partitions, Staff Compromise OK'd" the Washingtonville Courier reported:

> Parents won the battle for partitions in the new open Lincoln Acres Elementary School, Monday.

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42) The Board's custom was to avoid taking a vote whenever possible. Almost all actions were taken by consensus.

> But some parents who fought since April for a closed alternative to the new open school are still unhappy and say they may appeal the school board's decision to accept the staff's compromise plan.

A week after this Board of Education meeting at which the compromise proposal was discussed and passed, Biddle was asked what he thought of it. His reply was:

> Horseshit. The staff should have fought for what they wanted, but they didn't and they'll still be all right, they're good people. By January the community will like the school. It's just a matter of them seeing what happens here.

He continued:

> I didn't have much input into the compromise plan. The staff here is good. It's too bad they can't have the opportunity to use their professional judgement. We spent a lot of time on issues that had nothing to do with what is good for kids.

Brown's views a week after the Board meeting were somewhat similar to Biddle's. He stated that: "Biddle had no input. He thought that I worked out the plan out of necessity." He continued, saying that Biddle had told him early in July that the Board was considering installation of some type of partitions. In response, Biddle had designed a partition -- the workbench-pegboard -- which was sent to the school and found unacceptable by the teachers. Brown recounted the events this way.

> I told him that in terms of process, the staff was upset and that in terms of the staff, having prototypes delivered to the school was a dangerous process. I think Biddle thought he was in the wrong place in terms of process and stayed out of it. At that point I met with Irena Farrell, the president of the Board, and Grace Walters, another Board member. Sam talked with Stieglitz. We had a fear that a whole redesign would come out if a school board member suggested one. This thing has been decided for the last six months. "The issue is how far we have to bend to shut up the community," that's how they put it. We gave the least to quiet them down.

Brown's comment to the researcher that "this thing has been decided for the last six months" was his first acknowledgement that he had not been as open with the teachers as he had presented himself. Assessing the results of the compromise and the planning of the summer, Brown sounded blaming, and less than exuberant. He said:

> I'm about the same as at the mid-June board meeting, the last one Frisch was at. I don't think it's proper for me to sound arrogant about it but my experience is pretty unique. There aren't many planners willing to do what I can do. Washingtonville is not willing to do it. I was brought in under false pretenses. Now that I'm here I have an ethical responsibility to see what can be done. Washingtonville is back a few decades.

F. The Summer Workshop Continues

1. Remaining sessions

On Tuesday, the entire faculty brainstormed "affective" objectives, and teams worked in their teaching areas arranging furniture and materials. Because Alan and Jeanne wanted more windows and access to a sink they asked for and were granted permission to switch their teaching space with the space designated for the media center. (See Diagram III)

Wednesday began with more entire-faculty brainstorming of affective and work-habit objectives led by Sam. More work in teams filled the rest of the day.

Regina was unhappy with the reduction of space in the media center as a result of the compromise and the switch she had made with the BB cluster. Aware of the problem, Sam met with both intermediate groups, who agreed to give Regina several square feet. This solution left all involved pleased; it was one of the few genuinely cooperative efforts in recent weeks.

Teacher reactions to the reorganization were mixed:

> Priscilla: I think that Ellis read the situation correctly and made the right compromises.
>
> Jane: I like it.
>
> Jeanne: I was bored with the Board meeting.
>
> Wanda: I'm not pleased with walls and the 1-2, 2-3 but I can live with it.
>
> Glenda: I'm not happy about it, but I would like to get down to planning and I'm glad it's over.

For the remainder of the workshop, almost all teacher energies went into unpacking materials, storing it, and arranging furniture. To finish organizing their teaching areas, most teachers were planning to use the paid week following the workshop, volunteered time during August, and the two preparation days immediately before school opened in early September.

2. Evaluation of the workshop

In the faculty meeting. On July 29, the final day of the workshop, teams worked in their areas until 1:00, when the entire faculty met to evaluate the activities of the summer. Ellis made several announcements, including a decision not to have an open house for parents before school opened, as Jeanne and other teachers had suggested. His reason was that the school would not be ready for parents to see. He then introduced the notion of evaluating the workshop; the Board and the Instructional Council wanted a report.

Quickly reading the objectives from the original proposal, Brown commented briefly on whether or not they had been reached. In his opinion: team decision-making had been accomplished; centralization of basic skills materials in the resource center hadn't been done; physical division of the space had been accomplished (not as the staff had intended); written student needs accounting had been worked on to some extent in teams but not the entire group; methods for assessing program effectiveness had not been started ("we have not really decided how a program is working or not."). Finally, he left it vague whether the objective of clarifying student and parent decision-making roles was achieved.

Brown then asked if there were additional things that teachers would like to put in the report. Dori wanted a statement on "how we were hassled about the walls and the readjustment of the classes and how it kept us from getting our act together." Most others agreed that the conflict with the community and the problems caused by the survey should be mentioned. Regina also suggested including comments on the problems the faculty had with communicating with the central administration, but that in addition, "something positive" be included "about the time given to us and that we did accomplish something."

After a reminder by Ellis to submit comments on the assessment program by the end of the day, his concluding comment to the faculty was: "I'd like to say you did a good job. We're ready to go." Teachers returned to their areas to continue adjusting furniture that had recently arrived. At 3:00 p.m. that day the official summer workshop ended.

Brown's views. Privately, Brown admitted to having accomplished less during the summer workshop than he had hoped. He said to the researcher that the major area left unfinished was parental and student involvement -- which, when it did occur during the summer, was not in ways he or the faculty had intended. In terms of the faculty and its development over the summer, Brown had several observations. Faculty morale, he said, was:

> Not bad. They're naive. Part of that naivete is avoidance of what's going on politically. It's very easy for something to happen in the community that affects them. They give a passing glance at the Washingtonville Courier. Before long it's over with and they return to work, which isn't a bad way to handle it.

On the direction the staff would take in the coming year, he commented:

> The staff would have been very responsive to what I was doing. They have never been there before. Now I don't know. I did not select a group of people who are very tough. They don't fight for what they believe in. These are the kids who thought rationally about the Viet Nam war. Because they were logically right they thought they should be listened to. They can't understand political realities.

In terms of what the faculty had actually developed into, Brown was more optimistic.

> Every team with the exception of NBC has had a real struggle to get together. NBC has had the least trouble in working out role relationships. They appear to be more together than everybody else. But everybody else is making satisfactory progress and that's fine.

Finally, he did not expect the partitions to arrive until October or November.

Teachers' views. Many teachers had also commented privately on the events of the summer. Below are some of the comments teachers made on the last day of the workshop.

Wanda and Priscilla felt that most of the goals of the workshop were met. But Wanda felt that the staff became "fractured" during the summer -- she didn't know exactly what this meant, only that there had been a change. Alan and Jeanne did not accomplish all that they had hoped to. In fact, they had lowered their expectations early in the summer and didn't even reach them. Jeanne said that Sam had given as much help as can be expected: "He's only one person. Ellis hasn't given any help. He's only shot down good ideas." Jane thought that little planning had been accomplished during the summer. Her teammates, Katie and Sally, disagreed and thought that although it wasn't on paper a great deal had been planned.

A good deal later, after the school had been open for four months, we asked Ellis, Sam and the teachers on a questionnaire how they felt in retrospect about the summer workshop. The teacher responses on two questions asking for ratings of overall effects on the faculty as a whole were as follows:

> Looking at the positive effects, do you feel...
>
> 3 1. It had a strong positive effect on the school
>
> 6 2. It had a moderately positive effect.
>
> 9 3. It had a small positive effect.
>
> 0 4. It had little or no positive effect.
>
> And what do you feel about negative effects?
>
> 3 1. It had a strong negative effect on the school.
>
> 5 2. It had a moderately negative effect.
>
> 3 3. It had a small negative effect.
>
> 4 4. It had little or no effect.

Ellis answered that it had strong positive and strong negative effects; Sam's response was that it had a small positive effect. Brown explained his answer by writing that the positive effect was, "team coordination, communication, planning" and that the negative effect was, "Board pressure for re-structure."

Another question asked about the effects of the summer workshop on the teams. The teachers' answers were:

> Now more specifically, how do you feel the summer planning affected your teaching team?
>
> 3 1. It had a strong positive effect on my group or team.
>
> 4 2. It had a moderately positive effect.
>
> 6 3. It had a small positive effect.
>
> 4 4. It had little or no positive effect.

And what do you feel about negative effects?

2 1. It had a strong negative effect on my subgroup or team.

6 2. It had a moderately negative effect.

3 3. It had a small negative effect.

5 4. It had little or no negative effect.

Considering both positive and negative influences together, the summer workshop was evaluated retrospectively as having had, on balance, a somewhat more negative than positive effect on the school -- although individual judgements varied widely.

Community views. A July 31 editorial in the Courier: "Whatever Happened to Summer?" offered commentary on a variety of subjects, among them the Lincoln Acres school.

> What did we get this summer? Floods that caused $4.6 million in damage. A crisis over an open elementary school that sent parents who wanted a closed alternative into vicious battle with school board members and teachers. At least a dozen meetings over the issue.

Six months later, retrospective community responses to a questionnaire item concerning the events of the summer indicate that it had not been a pleasant experience for them (see Table 6.1). At least in retrospect, we note that though there was much diversity, certain themes are clear: the program did not have champions as being "the best available"; there was practically universal agreement that unsolved school-community problems remained; and few people thought that the Board had well represented the interests of the immediate parents.

It's also of interest to note that more parents felt an insufficient opportunity to influence than otherwise; and that more parents than not felt their suggestions had not been listened to and acted on. But only a small plurality (44% vs 36%) felt it had been hard to get answers about what the new school would be like. We can infer that for many parents, the answers were not what they wanted to hear.

However, we should emphasize again what had begun to be clear at the last Board meeting: the Lincoln Acres community was certainly not monolithically against the faculty's plans and hopes.

G. August Work

In mid-August, the partitions that jutted from the outer wall were removed and combined to form several walls in the instructional area.

TABLE 6.1

PARENT OPINIONS ABOUT THE INTENSIVE PLANNING PERIOD

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Parents had an opportunity to influence the planned educational program of the new school.	21%	31%	11%	23%	7%
b. Parents' suggestions were listened to and acted on.	16	33	23	19	3
c. School board members represented the interests of the Lincoln Acres community very well.	16	31	31	14	0
d. By the time school opened in the fall all problems between school personnel and community members had been settled.	52	34	6	2	1
e. The educational program of the school as planned represented the best available.	26	32	27	6	2
f. It was easy to get answers about what the new school would be like from school system staff.	20	24	14	33	3

Diagram IV shows the position of these partitions. The bulk of the partitions that were part of the compromise did not arrive in time for the opening of school in September.

During August, most teachers worked in the school for at least the five days for which they were to receive payment. Others contributed extra time. The major task was to finish organizing the teaching areas. Ellis and Sam supervised the delivery of large pieces of equipment for the kitchen and helped workmen rearrange the partitions. By the end of August, the school was nearly ready for students.

H. Analysis and Commentary

1. Key decisions

It may be useful to summarize what seemed to be the key decisions made during this intensive month -- those which on the face of it had substantial potential for the school's shape and future.

The Board's decision to require the community survey seemed crucial: it sharpened school-community conflict in many respects, though it was designed to reduce it. The teachers' associated decision to carry out the survey, while protesting vigorously, both set the stage for continued conflict and signalled their reluctant willingness to have their vision influenced by outside pressure. With this decision, it began gradually to be clear that Ellis would manage, even manipulate faculty decisions as he buffered the school from, and negotiated with, the Board and community; we shall return to this issue below.

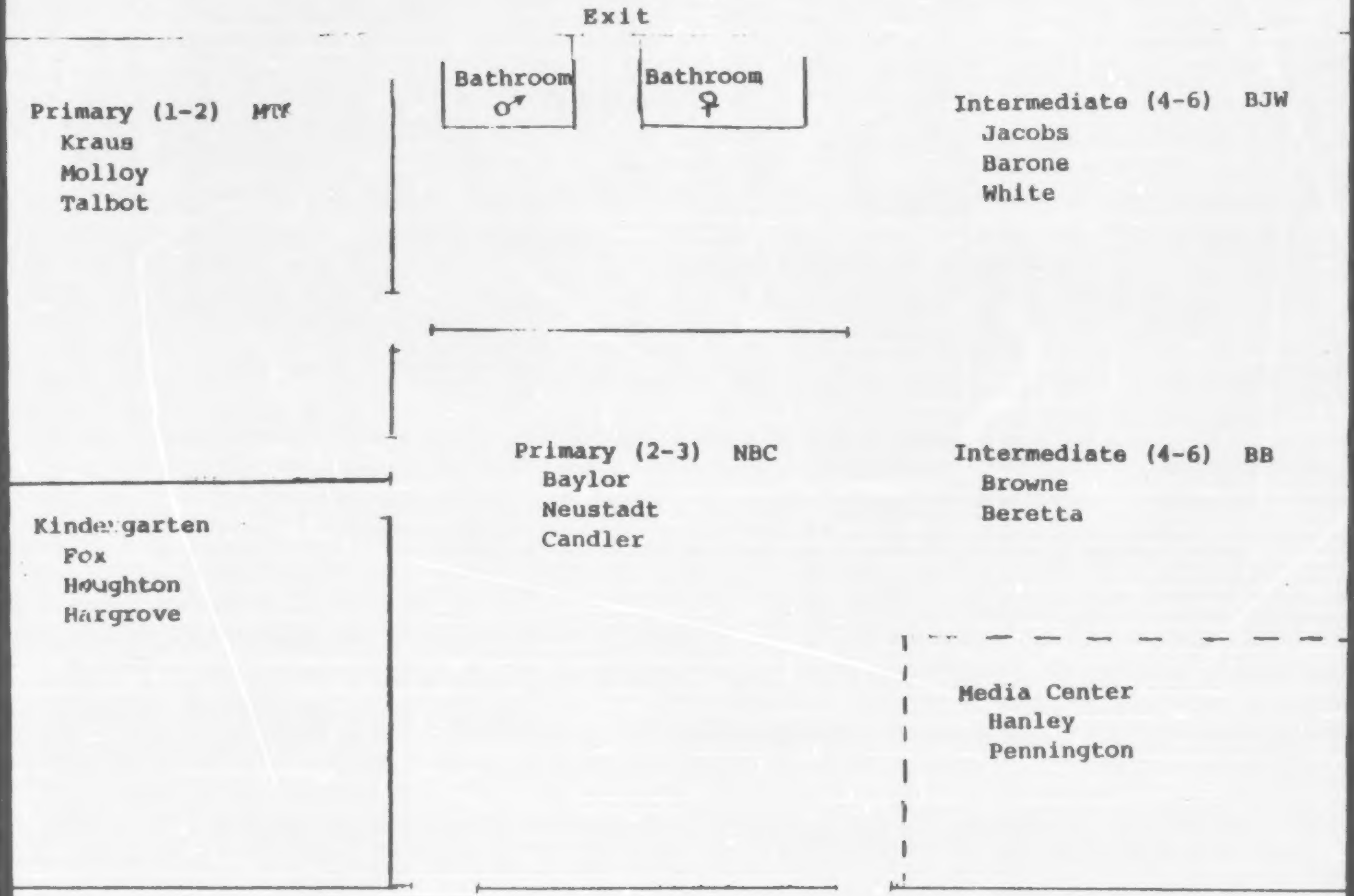
The tacit decisions to continue to hold the communications workshop, and to continue at the Playboy Club location, probably served to sharpen community conflict only slightly; they seemed more symbolic of the faculty's need to "get away" and its reluctance to be proactively "political" than anything else. At the workshop itself, the tacit decision by several key people (Bert, Sally, Ellis and Sam) not to surface and deal with genuine communications problems may well have set (or confirmed) a norm that problems in the system need not be dealt with directly.

The firmly-reconfirmed decision by teachers not to alter team composition, while it was natural, and reaffirmed team loyalty and cohesiveness, also reduced maneuvering flexibility during the period of the compromise discussion, and resulted in reduced ownership of the final decision.

The faculty's reluctant decision, engineered by Ellis, to accept the compromise partitioning plan and the 1-2, 2-3 grouping felt in many respects like a blow to the faculty's hopes, and perhaps to the community's sense of their professional expertise. It is ironic that more than one key figure in the conflict felt afterward that the compromise

DIAGRAM IV

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL PARTITIONS, AUGUST 1975


Exit
Bathroom ♂
Bathroom ♀
Primary (1-2) MTK
Kraus
Molloy
Talbot
Intermediate (4-6) BJW
Jacobs
Barone
White
Primary (2-3) NBC
Baylor
Neustadt
Candler
Intermediate (4-6) BB
Browne
Beretta
Kindergarten
Fox
Houghton
Hargrove
Media Center
Hanley
Pennington

Solid Lines = partitions.
Dotted lines = furniture.

need never have been offered; the validity of that claim is of course unassessable. But it is clear that the process of reaching the compromise decision altered Lincoln Acres school as an organization, and indeed its relation to the community. We turn to these issues next.

2. Changes in the emerging organization

By the end of the busy and complex summer workshop, two critical changes had occurred in the emerging organization. First, the reorganization of the primary grades and the acceptance of partitions altered important aspects of the original design. Secondly, the social relationships within the faculty became more strained and less egalitarian; manipulative decision-making replaced collaborative decision-making, and authority became more centralized in the principal. Alteration of the design -- the compromise -- was a direct result of the conflict with the community. Changes in social relationships and the authority structure were an indirect result of the community conflict. What were the dynamics of the conflict?

Intensification of the conflict. In the last chapter, the conflict was analyzed as being between democratic values and professional values: the community felt that a school bond issue that implied a particular educational arrangement had been subverted by the superintendent of schools, who now claimed that another form of education was more effective. Charles Frisch, a Board member, proposed a survey of the community to find out its actual attitudes toward the school. As a conflict resolution mechanism, the community survey had several unanticipated outcomes. It increased faculty opposition to the Board of Education because it threatened their professional judgement and autonomy; it created another "democratic" vehicle -- potentially almost a plebiscite -- which made casting aside of the results difficult. We can speculate that Ellis may have been relieved to find that the demographic data had been removed; it gave him a good reason to claim the data were invalid, and thus obtain more maneuvering room.

In any case, the survey permitted the Board of Education (and the educators) to bypass the original issue of whether or not the plans for the school honored the original design.43) The survey also brought charges from several Board members that the results were not tabulated or analyzed correctly and that their "true meaning" was not being followed. In general, it seems clear that the Board-mandated survey of the community did less to resolve the conflict than it did to increase it.

Conflict resolution. Ellis and Sam played central roles in efforts to resolve the conflict between the school and community. Ellis served

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43) This may have been an intended result of the survey. Many members of the Board of Education appeared not to want to make a decision.

as a buffer between the faculty and community leaders. He cast himself in the role of politician and was accepted by the faculty as making politically wise decisions. As we have noted, many of these decisions -- for example, the reorganization plan, especially the division of grades 1,2,3 -- were manipulated or managed by Ellis. Perhaps unwittingly, Sam (who had affective leadership qualities Ellis lacked) helped Ellis manipulate or coopt the faculty. He was the first to suggest the possibility of a compromise, and presented it not as a defeat for the faculty but as a gesture to show the community that "we're the good guys," a form of power enhancement.

Overall, Sam and Ellis played mainly positive roles: they eased the faculty into a difficult -- and initially quite unacceptable -- decision which avoided intensification of the conflict and eventually led to a partial resolution.

In the process of achieving the resolution, however, both men, but especially Ellis, created more differentiation in the authority structure of the organization. As principal, Ellis assumed a central role in the decision-making structure, since as Dori pointed out, the critical decisions had already been made and were in effect then sold to the faculty. Of course, Brown was not making these decisions under ideal circumstances; there was a considerable amount of pressure on him from the Board of Education, the community and probably Biddle to have the conflict resolved one way or another. He probably also felt pressure from the teachers; a successful resolution of the problem was needed to demonstrate his leadership abilities.

It also seemed clear at this point that though the early commitment had been to collegial decision-making by the faculty, their skill in delivering on this intention was not large. At several points of stress, their decision processes seemed wandering, unfocused. The fact that Ellis had usually led large-group decision-making in the past probably contributed to these skill lacks -- and made it easier for him to manipulate the compromise.

So the faculty had lost some power. The effect of this loss, however, was diffuse. Some felt they had not been treated fairly by Ellis, but the majority considered the real abuses to have been from the community and Board of Education. Biddle, even with his fairly inactive support for the faculty, was not viewed as having undermined their efforts as much as had the Board and community. By the end of the summer, the militancy the teachers had expressed in their letter to the Board about the community survey appeared once again in their contention that the compromise proposal was against their best professional judgement. But by the time of the compromise a shift had occurred; they now felt that they could live with almost any arrangement, provided that it was not one of totally self-contained classrooms.

Overall, the relationships among the faculty, although clearly strained by the conflict with the community, remained collegial and

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professional. Perhaps more importantly, open, professional relationships with teammates and between the teachers and administration, as reaffirmed in the communications workshop, remained a goal at the end of the summer.

3. Political stabilization

By the end of the workshop, the primary linkages of a durable sort between school and community were little different than before: Ellis and Biddle served as buffers and negotiators. The Board, more deeply involved than usually, served in its regular role of formal channel for citizen influence. The execution of the Board-mandated survey was a temporary school-community linkage; we have already discussed its effects.

But no new political linkages had yet been created, though the summer proposal had included this as an objective ("defining roles for parent involvement"). It seemed, too, that the teachers were ambivalent about how active, how environmentally confrontive, to be. Though they worded sharp objections in their letter to the Board and in the final compromise proposal, it took crisis to move them away from their natural preoccupation with the technical problems of planning the school. It seemed hard for them to realize that unless the political issues were dealt with, their technical efforts would come to little. Such a stance is not surprising: most teachers are naturally preoccupied with delivering teaching. And the fact that more than a few teachers were non-tenured may have made them even more inclined to "leave the driving" to others.

Expertise vs. democracy. Throughout the controversy, a major theme was the role of expertise or professional judgement, as contrasted with the role of democratic norms in specifying the degree of community influence on decisions. Although in most cases the educators argued from the claim that they possessed expert knowledge, they were tempted at times to fall back on head-counting. For example, Ellis expected to have enough votes on the Board of Education to receive a private meeting. And many teachers wanted to be responsive to the community; several even suggested that the results of the community survey be closely followed.

There was also community ambivalence concerning expertise; some opponents attacked the violation of democratic norms and did not directly question the educators' expert judgement. Others, however, openly questioned not only the suitability of the plans, but the faculty's ability to implement them. And, late in the summer, still other parents fully supported the teachers' professionalism.

The compromise reflected the ambivalence toward expertise. While the faculty claim of expertise did not "win" the conflict, enough of the original plan was left intact to preserve this important aspect of professionalism. Democratic norms, the counter-norms of expertise, were also only partially satisfied; one minor demand, to eliminate three grades in the primary classrooms, was fully met. But the major issue,

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the demand for self-contained classrooms, was only partially met by the agreement to install a few moveable walls. Indeed, the use of space was substantially unchanged from the original plans, as several Board members and parents noted.

In sum, the compromise avoided confronting the initial cause of the conflict -- the basic question of the legitimacy of the plan for the new school. But the display of effort put into the compromise, along with the minor concessions, appeared to satisfy enough prominent community members so they could endorse the plan and call for cooperative relations with the school in the future.

4. Social-architectural design

How much slippage had occurred between the original vision, the faculty's goals for the school, and the emerging design? On the face of it, probably less than the pain over the compromise would have suggested. Though the faculty's intention to keep space use flexible was somewhat hampered, and the multi-age grouping range was narrowed in the primary teams from three to two years, it seemed as though many of the original goals were achievable within the emerging organization. It is also correct to say, however, that one of the original "process" goals -- the idea of collegial decision-making -- was beginning to be threatened by Ellis and Sam's engineering of consent.

5. Actualization

Finally, what we can note about the linkage between planning and implementation, and the factors that would promote or hinder actualization of the plans? The community conflict during the summer workshop diverted some of the faculty's time and energy from planning the school. Midway through the workshop, when the possibility of a compromise became evident, uncertainty over what kind of educational program they were planning for also slowed the teachers' efforts. Despite this, materials and furniture were arranged in teaching spaces so that they were nearly ready for students by the end of the summer. Objectives lists -- which actually constituted the curriculum -- were prepared for all academic areas and were in progress for social and emotional areas.

Time was also spent on brainstorming lists of decision-making areas and role descriptions. Brainstormed products, however, were rarely taken much beyond the initial stages of listing of ideas by the group. In most cases, Sam was assigned to refine the lists, and they were eventually to serve as a reference work for the school. It appears that brainstorming mainly performed an investment-building function -- everyone's ideas were accepted and treated equally -- and did less to develop an intellectual framework or operational guide for the operation of the school. Since brainstorming was the only explicit faculty-wide method used in discussion of educational philosophy during the summer workshop, we might conclude that the consensus on educational views was not as deep or strong as the planners of new schools often hope for.

In general, the faculty's evaluation that most summer workshop objectives were reached is correct in kind -- with the exception of the goal of specifying parent and student roles in educational decision-making -- but there is some question about the depth of achievement. As we have noted, the most important link between planning and implementation was that the planners were shortly to become the operators of the new school.

VII. SCHOOL OPENS: THE FIRST WEEKS

September arrived as expected, and the school opened. Teachers reported two days earlier than students to complete last-minute preparations. On both days, an early-morning faculty meeting focused on operational aspects of the school, from when lunch would be served to where teachers' cars should be parked. Ellis asked teachers to sign in and out every day, keys to closets and bathrooms were distributed and the myriad details necessary for running a school were dealt with. In these preliminary days, speculative anticipation of what the school would be like was pushed aside for the practical business of setting rules and procedures.

A. The Preparation Days

1. The first day

On the first day, several important, non-routine, topics were discussed. Ellis requested that during the day each team take time to review their schedule and find a time when he could regularly join them to teach each week; the only day he could not teach was Wednesday, when the district principals met all day. Staff response to this request was slow; Brown had to repeat it the following day.

Another announcement concerned student interns from a local state college. After spending a few days at each elementary school in the district, the twelve interns would select schools they wanted to spend time in -- observing classes and aiding teachers -- until their semester ended at Christmas vacation.

Budget issues were also important. Since the voters had rejected the school budget in March, the township council had cut $125,000 and an additional $180,000 had been reduced in state aid, the Board of Education had devised ways of maintaining essential services, but had to reduce some educational programs. Brown announced that the budget cuts would affect Lincoln Acres in the following ways: secretarial time would be limited, professional days for teachers would be decreased, vocal music and speech programs would be eliminated, and teachers who left the district were not being replaced. To Brown the most important loss was that in January computer terminals were to be removed from as yet undesignated elementary schools. He told the teachers:

> In order to keep ours we will have to document its use and show why we should have it. Other schools will not care and others will fight us for it. We'll want to have ours. Whatever you do with the computer let me know so we can document it.

For Brown, the computer was the primary means of keeping track of student progress. Only a few teachers, however, had ever expressed interest in any application of the computer.

Perhaps the most important discussion of the first day concerned the proposed formation of the Parent Teachers Association. Ellis announced that Sam was preparing a letter to inform parents of ways in which they could participate in the school, for example, by donating household junk for use in art classes. Later in the week Ellis intended to contact community people to begin formation of a PTA. He asked for teacher comments on the role they desired for the PTA. Essentially, the teachers said that they should be informed of PTA activities, because in past years, communications between parents and teachers had been poor. Thus many PTA programs, particularly fund-raising drives, were not successful. Ellis suggested that there be a teacher adviser on the PTA to improve communication between the two groups and give the teachers influence in the association. He then asked what types of activities teachers would like the PTA to engage in. Several teachers suggested that the PTA pay for assemblies, a function it usually could perform well. Sam, an advocate of parent participation, said:

> I'd like to see it become significant so that teachers can participate. Fund raising is fine but it should be something more. Parents and teachers should be involved. It can be a good communication device.

In reply, several teachers remarked that in their communities and in schools they previously taught in the PTA had rarely been successful in involving both parents and teachers. Glenda suggested, in response to this discussion, that: "One thing that would be useful would be some training or a workshop for parents." Others agreed, but were concerned whether a workshop could be meaningful; it was argued that if it wasn't, an entirely social PTA would be preferable. After the topic shifted slightly, Ellis ended the conversation of the PTA by saying:

> I can see some people are chomping at the bit to get a PTA going. We ought to get them involved and have some meaningful activity. I think I have something I can speak from now.

Parents, an irritant to the teachers during the summer, were to be actively included in the school as volunteers; only a few teachers hesitantly desired a vigorous PTA. But as Glenda's motion for parent training suggests -- it had been her idea that the staff have a communications workshop -- some teachers did consider taking an active role in shaping the PTA.

2. The second preparation day

On September 3, the second faculty preparation day, the first topic in the meeting was instructional objectives. Brown announced that the status of the objectives was that one curriculum area a month would be added, for example, language in September, math in October, and so on. He also said that he didn't want to see daily teacher plans but a record had to be kept by all teams of each child's work, so that he could "keep up" with what children were learning. Sam then explained the record keeping system.

A variety of issues was then discussed: procedures for children's receiving free lunches, what to do with children who arrived early in the morning, and problems with security in the building. A time for weekly faculty meetings was also decided on. Rebecca suggested that the faculty meet during lunch once a week: she reported that the result of an informal survey was that only one person objected. The objection was from Jeanne, who explained that at her previous school, lunch time faculty meetings often left her feeling upset and affected her teaching during the afternoon. After a short discussion it was decided, more or less by Ellis alone, that they would meet once each week after school and that, "the nuts and bolts of running this place," would be in written form, supplemented with occasional lunch-time meetings.

The last item Ellis introduced for discussion was special instructional areas. As mentioned above, because of district-wide budget cuts, vocal music had been eliminated and weekly allotments of art and physical education time were substantially diminished. Reduced special subjects meant that teachers would have less in-school time for planning during the week. Norbert commented on this:

> I'm glad you brought that up. I went to a lot of open space schools in the state. The only one I saw and liked was Project A.B.C. in Meadows. The principal there gave teachers released time with specials.

Ellis said:

> You are in a better position than I am to get free time because the contract is being negotiated. Unless it is in there in black and white you'll never get it. You need planning time. The high school has it and it's about time we got it. But we don't even have anyone willing to be a building representative to WEA.

Someone suggested two other strategies for gaining planning time: write a letter to or make a public statement before the Board of Education. Afraid that he might have been misunderstood, Ellis emphasized that the teachers needed planning time; he assured them that although the contract failed to specify released time he was looking for ways to create it. The meeting ended with Ellis' comment: "Well, I finally had a sign that it's really going to work. Last night I couldn't sleep." (This dry joke illustrates another characteristic aspect of Ellis' style: though he usually did not express warmth directly or easily, he did have an ironic sense of humor that often served well in his relationships with teachers.)

With their heads crammed with rules and regulations covering everything from where to park a car to the amount of milk money for a week, the teachers finished arranging their teaching areas for the last time before they would welcome the students. They worked quietly and demonstrated no apprehension about the opening of school. It seems reasonable to speculate, though, that the faculty must have experienced some doubt over whether or not the conflict with parents would erupt again once school opened.

B. The First Day of School

When the school opened for students on September 4, 1975[44a] all teaching areas were well prepared. Furniture was arranged in educationally functional patterns; there were learning centers, and old sofas in "quiet areas," and most classrooms were elaborately decorated with bulletin boards, pictures and displays of books. The carpet had been repaired, leaving no traces of the uneven floor still underneath it. Walls -- the symbol of the community's partial victory -- were only those that had been rearranged from those already in the building (see p. 170, Diagram IV); several teaching spaces were separated with barriers of furniture. Overall, the impression the school gave was one of openness; it did not look like or have an atmosphere like that of a typical school building, with long corridors and small classrooms on either side. Despite the few walls, when Lincoln Acres school opened for students, it was an open space school.

At 9:00 a.m. the doors were opened and the crowd of students and parents that had been gathering since 8:30 a.m. poured into the school. Brown, Pennington and Regina Hanley greeted the students, directed them to their teachers and, in a few cases, when a child didn't know who his or her teacher was,[44b] found which class they belonged in. Parents were allowed to enter the school and many took the opportunity to inspect their child's classroom. Michael Karalis was one of the few fathers to visit the school when it first opened. Visibly impressed, his evaluation was: "It looks like they did a good job. They really worked hard. It's always exciting to open a new school."

[44a] Once school opened for children fieldwork became more demanding; instead of a focused event such as a meeting, the entire school was now the object of study. It was difficult to know where to look first, whether attempts at sampling were at all successful and what issues should be selected for more intensive data collection than others. Fortunately, even in the opened school, events such as faculty meetings, Board of Education meetings and informal meetings among teachers helped focus the research, since the topics of discussion indicated what was important to the participants. One key area, of course, was problems that students, teachers, and administrators faced, especially those that in some way -- either remote or obvious -- tied the planning and the controversy during planning to the actual operation of the school.

[44b] In August the Washingtonville Courier had printed lists of children and the classes they had been placed in.

By 9:15 a.m. all children had been placed in classrooms, teachers were introducing themselves, and in some classes instruction had already begun. The kindergarten conducted twenty-minute orientation sessions for students and their parents; the teachers were busy explaining the program and answering questions the entire day. Before long, teachers -- each teacher had been assigned a "home-base" group of 25 children -- were escorting their students through the building. They explained the various rooms and used the tour as an opportunity to instruct students in the rules and regulations of the school. The children were well behaved; many were already familiar with their teachers from experiences at Fernwood school in previous years.

By mid-morning most of the faculty thought the day was going well. In Sam's view, "getting people in here today went more smoothly than it ever did at any other school -- even the ones that were running for several years." Ellis was also surprised at how quickly the 350 students found their places. He commented sarcastically that the smooth entry was: "part of the benefit of community involvement -- they know the teachers." Teachers, even though they experienced a little more tension than Sam and Ellis had, considered the first hours of school a success, for the most part. Dori Kraus commented that it was:

> A little rough in the beginning. Priscilla's children got out of hand. I couldn't talk with all of the noise so I went out in the hall. Now it's better. I need order -- everybody doing things and none of this running around. I'll learn to relax a little and loosen up.

As she spoke, Dori looked around the teaching area. Priscilla and Wanda had taken their classes out-of-doors for recess, leaving her alone with her class; she was a little shocked by the implications of her statement. Rebecca Barone, while monitoring her class as they played a game, observed that:

> At first I felt a little shaky. I didn't know what to do. Now it's all right. Compared to other first days today is good. It's good to know you have support and are not alone in a classroom by yourself. I'm a lot looser because of that. Usually, on the first day I give the kids a lot of work to do.

Near the end of the session, which was a half day ending at 1:00 p.m., most of the classes were playing games and the noise in the instructional area was steadily increasing. A few children were crawling on the floor, running around, and, in general, not doing "school-like" activities. To the researcher, who was educated in a grim elementary school in a working-class neighborhood in the 1950's (which was probably the experience of many Lincoln Acres parents), the school was beginning to have a "permissive" quality. Just as the researcher had written the word permissive in his notebook, a parent passed by and said:

> It's so quiet here I can't believe it. My house is noisier. A lot of parents are going home after they take their kid to the kindergarten saying it's "so" quiet. They're ashamed of the big stink they caused. It's quieter than my house -- at least it seems so.

Another aspect of the school that impressed the observer -- even before Rebecca's remark: "Usually, on the first day I give the kids a lot of work to do" -- was that in most cases, though time was spent going over rules and in academic work, substantial emphasis was placed on introducing the children to their classmates and teachers, and on "enjoyment" experiences, such as art, dancing and pleasure reading. As Rebecca's comment acknowledged, teachers ordinarily not only "lay down rules" but also, "let them know they're here to work" during the first days of school. The folk wisdom is that if this pattern isn't followed and the teacher is too lenient at the beginning of the year, later on it will be difficult to control the class. Rebecca's comment implied that this practice was foregone this year because there was support from other teachers, reducing the need for tight control. It seems plausible to assume that in addition it probably would have been difficult to behave sternly toward the students in front of other adults without undermining the humane, "caring" self-image the teachers desired. Of course, some teachers enjoy the reputation of being petty tyrants, but such teachers were absent from the Lincoln Acres faculty.

School ended for the day at 1:00 p.m., and the children left quickly and as free of problems as when they had entered. Several teachers congregated in Sally's, Jane's and Katie's area, which was in the middle of the school, and had the following hurried exchange:

> Jane: The kids were together. It went well.
>
> Jeanne: Yeah, the work we did was worth it. The kids were good.
>
> Sam to Dori: Did you make it O.K.?
>
> Dori: It was the worst first day in six years but I got through it.
>
> Sally: The kids were fine. My Wright school kids would have been all over the place.

Wanda to Sally: How was your day?

Sally: Much better than I expected but not great. How was yours?

Wanda: Fine, but I don't know about my teammates. Dori (who had left the area) is upset and Priscilla got some wild kids.

Sally to Norbert, who was passing through: How was your day?

Norbert: It was neat. It was good. It was good to get back.

Sally: Ellis seemed pretty happy today.

Jane: Yeah, he did.

After cleaning up the teaching spaces, rearranging furniture, and hurriedly preparing for the next day, the teachers had a meeting in the teachers' lounge at 1:30. They were in a good mood; they joked mainly about non-school incidents. Ellis began the meeting by observing that he had not noticed many things wrong with the school; he suggested, however, that the bicycle racks should be moved to the side of the building and that student entrance in the morning would probably be smoother if the intermediate children used a side entrance. He was asked about fire drill procedures and explained them in detail.

When Ellis asked if there was anything else to discuss, a variety of questions and requests surfaced. These included operational aspects of the school: whether pencil sharpeners were available, if broken glass in the playground could be removed, and what to do with children when it rained at lunch time. When Ellis couldn't answer a question (for instance, the one about attendance procedures), he called in a person who could (in this instance, Monica, the secretary). In this meeting there were no major complaints or difficulties mentioned, and the minor problems discussed seemed to have been satisfactorily, if only temporarily, solved. Ellis ended the first faculty meeting of the operating school with another cheerfully ironic comment: "Well, it all went so well today that we're planning to have school again tomorrow."

To the faculty, the first day of school was a success.

C. The Second Day

Nothing was significantly different on the second day; children entered the building quickly, classes began, and by 1:00 p.m. school was finished for the week, since it was Friday. As on the previous day, there was no team teaching; children reported to a "home base" teacher and remained with that teacher for the entire day. One slight exception was that, at one point in the morning, Norbert's, Glenda's and Rebecca's classes were combined and Norbert taught a math lesson to the entire group while the other two teachers observed. In Jane's, Sally's and Katie's classes the only hint of team teaching that day was a recess when the teachers jointly supervised all of the children. During the recess the noise from this team reached a pitch that could be heard in Alan's and Jeanne's teaching area.

The delay in team teaching was the result of Ellis' request that for the first few days each teacher spend time only with the children assigned directly to him or her. The purpose was to assist student adjustment to a new situation and enable teachers to become familiar with the children as individuals. Even with this "traditional" teacher-pupil arrangement, the second day of school was relaxed, children were engaged in a variety of activities, and although the noise level often interfered with other classes at times, there were no serious behavior or operating problems.

In the course of the morning Sam and Ellis walked through the building several times. They stopped and talked with students, watched a lesson for a short time or simply looked in on a class. Neither one intervened in the operation of classrooms.

D. The First Full Week of School

1. Monday

Monday, September 8, was the first complete day of school; students arrived at 9:00 a.m. and left school at 3:00 p.m., with 11:30-12:30 for lunch and recess. During the course of the morning there was a wide range of activities in each classroom: testing, games, outdoor recreation, lectures on rules and behavior and bookkeeping tasks, such as sorting those children who ate lunch in school from those who didn't. In several primary classrooms there were multiple activities at a single time -- different groups of children working on different exercises -- while in others, mostly the intermediates, activities tended to be organized for an entire class. For instance, the NBC team had children spread throughout the teaching area in a variety of learning centers. The cumulative noise of children talking occasionally interfered with more focused activities in neighboring teaching areas, such as giving an oral phonics test.

That morning, Alex Georgiades, an active opponent of open space education during the summer, toured the school with Sam Pennington and appeared to be pleased with what he saw. As it happened, when he went into the intermediate classroom where his son was a student, the entire class was taking a test in a situation similar to that of a self-contained classroom. Another parent, Mrs. Charles Frisch, helped Regina Hanley organize the library. Mrs. Frisch had worked as a volunteer in the Fernwood library for several years.

Teacher evaluations of the morning varied. Sally felt as though it was going well but too slowly: "I just have to be patient. I want to get the whole show on the road too quickly. But I have to remember that the kids can't handle it all at once." Regina, who except for Ellis was the only faculty member to have participated in the opening of a new open space elementary school, reflected:

> Last year at Janesville we had all kinds of pre-opening meetings and not much was accomplished. They worked out schedules for which classes would tour the building on the first day, etc. It was chaos. That wasn't so here and we had no meetings.

For Jeanne, noise from nearby classes was a problem; several of her students mentioned the noise and asked when walls were coming. She continued:

> Some parents have come to me and said that the place still looks pretty open. One thing that I couldn't anticipate and still can't figure out is that at first we had a space in the middle with no furniture and we had all the kids meet there on the floor. They didn't like it and asked if they could sit on chairs. I thought it would be a big deal for them!

In Katie's view, events proceeded as planned but, "there are still some bugs." Rebecca Barone felt that "things went well this morning but a little disorganized. No, not disorganized -- unorganized, though. The kids don't seem to need order as much as we do." She reported that:

> Laura, the intern, said that it went well. She said that she expected chaos. I asked her why and she said that a teacher in another school told her that kids were running around here and that it is in chaos. I don't know how the rumor got started. It must have been by someone who hasn't been here.

The rumor that the school was chaotic after only two half-days of operations is striking. It indicates that curiosity about the new school was high in the environment (including, apparently, teachers in other elementary schools).

After lunch, the activities in the teaching areas were similar to those of the morning. Toward the end of the day, the noise level in several areas, especially NBC's, increased considerably. This prompted a lecture on behavior for all of the children in the NBC pod, shortly before school ended. As the children sat on the floor, Sally intoned:

> There are some rules that we all must learn. When you make noise it causes problems for others. In a school this size you have to work with us. If you disturb us you leave, it's that simple. You may not disturb your friends, or me, or Miss Baylor, or Miss Neustadt. That's a rule that's never broken. Do you want to talk over there? (Some children are talking -- Sally waits for quiet.)
>
> Katie: We let everybody go to an activity area today. At the Wendy house (a play house) people didn't clean up. They didn't at other areas also. These things are in the school but they don't have to be, we can give them to other classes. I don't want to stay after school to clean up. Tomorrow when we say clean up, clean up your area.
>
> Sally: I hate to end the day like this. I think we should sing a song before we go so I'm not grouchy. But there are some rules we need. Do not disturb your friends. If you do you're out of the class. Does everybody think that's fair? (The children answered "yes" in unison.)
>
> Katie: One other thing. I saw some people cleaning up when they didn't have to (she then read a list of children who had cleaned up). That was very good.
>
> Sally: I liked when we came into school this morning and everybody sat down right away. What are some of the things you liked? (Kids raised their hands and told about the things they liked, for example, the rabbit, the Wendy house, etc.)
>
> Sally: What I like best is that we're sitting here like a happy family -- nobody's pushing or shouting. Do you have anything to say? (Jane answered "no.")

After a song, the class was dismissed.

Another cluster was finishing a similar rule-reinforcing session with their class. A teacher told them, "I felt as though I was teaching in Yankee Stadium." Sam, who observed the lecture along with the researcher, explained: "We found we had to lay down the law for two weeks last year before things really settled in." Earlier in the afternoon Dori gave a similar lecture to her students.

The first full day of school ended with some teachers assuming a more traditional role toward their students than they had desired -- that of disciplinarian. And adjustment to the architectural features of the school was more difficult than had been anticipated.

After dismissal, the faculty gathered in the teachers' lounge for their weekly meeting. Ellis presided over the meeting, which began with an announcement that he would start reading student math objectives checklists (also known as profiles) by the end of the month. He then raised the related issue of report cards, saying: "I don't have any planned yet and I'd like to hear suggestions from you." The first comment was from Priscilla, who asked what the results of the community survey had indicated about parental preference for a reporting system. Ellis said that the findings were that parents were strongly against grades, that they wanted high teacher contact, and that they wanted immediate notification if something was wrong.[45] Following that, a lengthy debate began over how frequently report cards should be issued and whether they should be supplemented with parent-teacher conferences. Brown then asked if the teachers wanted to ask parents about frequency and type of reporting. The faculty's opinion was to delay involving parents. Brown then made the following suggestion:

> One thing I'll throw out is -- when I throw out ideas don't pay them any abnormal respect -- when I worked in another school the teachers worked out their own report cards. Each had a different one. The only thing was that they had to be approved by the office mainly on clarity, and in some cases the teacher hadn't had enough experience and needed some guidance. I think we can do that team-wide, and I think Regina is right about having something to be able to use as a basis with parents.

Sam volunteered to aid anyone in designing a report card. Jeanne made the suggestion, which was agreed to by the faculty, that report cards be the same for an entire grade level to avoid parents' wondering: "how come she got a grade in a particular area and my child didn't?"

The meeting then turned to an announcement by Regina concerning films for classroom use, and Sam arranged a meeting for the following day for teams interested in having the college interns work with them. SWEP (Student Work Experience Program , a high school student work program) and the way it would be used in Lincoln Acres school, was briefly discussed.

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[45] Ellis' main responses correctly reflected the findings he had presented to the Board of Education. The data were: "How do you like to see your child's progress reported?"

"Some written system other than letter grades or numbers" -	72%
"Conferences with the teacher(s)" -	54%
"Letter grades," or "Numbers" -	10%
Other responses -	11%

The data do not show, however, that parents "wanted immediate notification if something was wrong."

Brown then made the following announcement:

> I would like to get the parent-teacher group begun soon by having an open house next week. I checked on your medical records before and found there were no weak hearts.
>
> Norbert: I just got one -- it's a little early for me. (Other faculty members made mock nasty comments about the parents.)

The open house activities were to include the presentation of a piano to the school by LAHA, and the formation of a PTA steering committee. The format of the open house was of paramount concern to the teachers. The alternative strategies proposed were to permit parents to wander through the building and ask questions, or to structure the evening by having teachers make presentations in their teaching areas. There was no clear preference for either plan. After more discussion, Ellis said that what he heard from the teachers was that they wanted to be able to tell parents what they were doing. With this the structured arrangement was settled on. When asked if more open houses would be planned Brown said: "I hope only once and then I'm out of the PTA planning. I would hope that the teachers involved are clever enough to work in the thing and guide them. They may want one again in the fall." Problems with finding a mutually agreeable day (by now typical) resulted in setting the open house for Thursday, September 18.

A fairly long and detailed discussion of lunch money collection procedures followed; it appeared to answer all questions. The meeting ended with Ellis' announcement that teacher interaction films would be arriving soon and that the music teacher, who would be leaving the school system in a few weeks, would offer a Kodaly workshop for the faculty if they were interested. Arrangements were also made for Wanda to run a Cuisenaire workshop the Monday after the Kodaly workshop. It was Ellis' plan to conduct professional workshops during the Monday meeting time and to restrict procedural meetings to lunchtime. When the meeting ended at 4:40, teachers returned to their instructional areas to finish cleaning and preparing for the following day.

2. The first week continues

School routines such as student entrance, exit, lunch, and discipline remained unproblematic in most instances; the problems that did occur were easily and quickly solved. Instructional patterns remained stable also; the primary grades typically had more variety in instructional activities at one time than the intermediate levels, which spent a substantial amount of time on written assessment tests.

Team teaching, an ill-defined concept, was still limited. By the end of the week, the only observable difference between teaching techniques at Lincoln Acres school and "traditional" self-contained classrooms was that on occasion the BJW and NBC teams would have students rotate among teachers. For instance, Norbert would teach social studies, Rebecca math and Glenda language arts to a group of 25 students each. After a half hour lesson, the teachers would present the same material to another group of students. In other teams, particularly in the primary grades, learning centers were spread throughout the area; they were supplied with self-instructional materials that required minimal monitoring from teachers.

Another instructional innovation began on Friday afternoon when Ellis taught in a classroom. He spent nearly an hour explaining rudimentary science experiments to a group of MTK students. Brown sat on the floor with the ten children, many of whom were at first reluctant to join his class. During the lesson he never lectured to the group but instead, demonstrated and worked either individually or with small groups. He seemed to enjoy himself and, after overcoming their initial fear, the children relaxed too.

College interns continued to observe classes in all schools in the district, including Lincoln Acres. The following week they were to be placed in a school where they would remain for the semester. In addition, plans for the open house went forward as Barbara Berger, on Ellis' request, checked with parents and found that Thursday, September 18 was acceptable. Also during the week the president of the Board of Education, Irena Farrell, toured the school. She appeared to be pleased by what she observed.

Throughout the first full week of school, teachers arrived early in the morning and stayed late each night -- often until 5:30. Several often ate lunch at their desks while they corrected student papers or planned activities for the afternoon. Others spent Saturdays in the school planning instructional activities. In general, time invested in preparation for daily school activities far exceeded the time teachers were contractually obligated to spend.

E. Problems Begin Developing

Noise continued to be a problem in some areas of the school, especially for Alan and Jeanne. Another, more serious, problem developed during the first week; Wanda, Priscilla and Dori had difficulty team teaching.

Wanda, Priscilla and Dori had taught for several years at Fernwood school, where they shared materials and ideas. They requested that they come as a group to Lincoln Acres. Unlike the other teams in the school, with the exception of BJW, they had selected their teammates.

By Tuesday of the first full week of school, however, relations among the members of the MTK team had deteriorated to the point that they all felt that what they had planned wasn't working. According to Dori, the problem was differences in personality and educational philosophy, in particular, disagreement over what could be expected in the first days of school from first grade students, for example in reading. Another issue was differential amounts of time spent in evening preparation.

On Wednesday the MTK team planned to remain after school to discuss the problems. Hesitant to involve Ellis, they invited Sam to join them, but he was unable to because of a graduate course that met after school. Instead they met alone until 5:15 that night. The meeting was tearful and uncomfortable. For the time being, though, the problems were at least partially resolved and the team appeared to be willing to confront and manage them; they decided to meet the following week with Ellis and Sam.

Concluding comments

Overall, during the first week many traditional interactions took place between teachers and students. In almost every team, teachers found temselves, at least once, either punishing or threatening punishment of the entire class. It did not appear that these reluctant departures from a "humanistic" approach to education permanently marred teacher-pupil interaction. Indeed, after the first week there were infrequent circumstances that required student "disciplining."

Children were not the only ones for whom rules were set: rules of behavior for the teachers were established. These included signing in, participation in faculty meetings, and the myriad rules regulating daily activities such as milk money collection, attendance and fire drills.

Finally, although some parents wandered through the building this week, they were not considered a problem by teachers, and plans were made to introduce the school to parents and to form a PTA. Negative feelings toward parents, while not eliminated, did not increase during the first week of school.

In sum, the first full week of school, while successful in most areas, also revealed some potential difficulties in the social system of the school. Two of the more important problems were that noise levels were increasing and that one teaching team was experiencing interpersonal strains.

F. The Second Week of School

1. New personnel

A major event of the second week of school was the addition of new personnel to the school. Six interns from Reade State College had selected Lincoln Acres school to fulfill their student teaching requirements.[46] They were to work until Christmas vacation with teachers who requested them. Each member of NBC had an intern, BJW had two, and MTK had one. Alan and Jeanne, and the kindergarten teachers, requested that they not be given an intern.

The other additional personnel were parent volunteers. Thirty-six had responded to a notice sent home by Regina and approved by Ellis, requesting help in the media center. Somewhat surprised at the large turnout, Regina thought that many would have to be redistributed throughout other areas of the school -- for example, the office, or possibly classrooms. It should be noted that these were not full-time volunteers, but mothers who were able to spend a few hours each week in the school.

2. The teams

By Thursday of the second week, what had at least appeared to be progress in solving the problems of the MTK team turned out not to have been. At lunch the team met with Ellis and there seemed to be movement toward an understanding in at least one important area -- who would teach reading to which groups. The team stayed until 5:30 that night organizing their program. For example, Priscilla was supposed to teach reading to students from both of the other teachers' homebase groups. But this agreement did not last. Dori's view was that instead of doing team teaching they were actually three self-contained classrooms, but with the disadvantage of no walls to eliminate noise.

All the other teams were gradually attempting to expand their use of team teaching. More use of combined classes (across both grade levels and teachers), less-confining supervision of students, and individualization of instruction were emerging. No serious problems were evident in any team other than MTK.

3. Student-teacher interaction

The ways teachers dealt with students during the early weeks of school were similar. First, in these initial two weeks -- and later on -- there were seldom attempts by teachers to segregate students according to sex. For instance, when the children were organized to go to another room, or to leave the building, boys were not required to stand in one line and girls in another. A second similarity was that teachers did not require regimentation of students. Lining up, going to the bathroom as an entire group, sitting in straight rows, not chewing gum - and other student control devices were not present. The only time the children were routinely put in straight lines during the day was while

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46) They accounted for half of the interns assigned to the district. They had spent several days in each elementary school before making a selection.

they waited for hot lunches. As we shall see, absence of these traditional control mechanisms does not mean that discipline and conformity pressure were not present.

A third similarity was that in all teams lecturing, with the teacher as the sole focus of attention, was minimal. Most often, even when the teacher was the point of attention, instruction was, if not on an individual level, on a small group level. It usually took the form of a dialogue between teachers and students instead of being entirely directed toward the student.

Finally, related to this tendency toward dialogue -- and to a large extent enabling it -- was the school-wide practice of having groups of students work on a variety of activities at one time, often without assistance from a teacher.47) In fact, this aspect of the school was, by the third week, one of the chief products of team teaching.

Teams controlled their students with generally similar techniques. As we have already noted, on at least one occasion in the first weeks all teachers found themselves in the position of scolding the entire class for unruliness. After these initial lectures, little time was spent disciplining the entire class; individual students periodically had to be reminded of rules and regulations and in some instances punished, usually by having to remain after school. For the most part, during the course of the day student behavior was regulated by oral or written operating procedures, such as: "Only three people leave the room at one time to go to the bathroom," "Five minutes before art period is over, clean-up time," and so on. Initially, these were often put in the form of commands from the teachers, but they became so much a part of the school routine that after a short time their meaning was not questioned by either students or teachers. Thus, many of the explicit rules of the classroom became un-noticed norms governing both student and teacher behavior.

Some aspects of overtdiscipline varied among teams, however, as well as among members of teams. Dori, Wanda and Priscilla spent a considerable amount of time during the first weeks demonstrating the correct way to do a variety of things. Although their children were slightly older, and they did not hesitate to punish individual children, the NBC team developed a more laissez faire posture toward behavior in the classroom than MTK's. In the intermediate teams, the men controlled their classes by the use of great amounts of energy in their teaching delivery: they were highly entertaining speakers, rapidly moving about the room, and in general, exuding energy. The female intermediate teachers were much more low-keyed than their male teammates and exercised control by

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47) As noted above, there was less diversity of activities in the intermediate grades than in the primary grades.

having established firm, and in some cases, non-verbal rules. Jeanne, in particular, seldom had to discipline a child; her mannerisms alone, including her facial expressions, were effective control mechanisms.

In several respects the patterns of student-teacher interaction in Lincoln Acres school were in sharp contrast with those in "traditional" classrooms, which place more emphasis on uniformity of behavior and tend to focus attention on the teacher. Clearly, there were no authoritarian teachers.

4. Student behavior

Somewhat surprisingly, the children adjusted to the new school almost immediately. Among the probable reasons were that most of them had attended Fernwood school and were familiar with education in Washingtonville as well as with several of the teachers who had come from Fernwood. They were also familiar with each other. An illustration of this is that on the first day of school many children in an intermediate class took it upon themselves to totally change the teacher's predesignated seating arrangement, so they could be near friends.

The freedom of movement granted to students by teachers and made possible by the open space did not seem to be abused. During observations, few fights, running or other disruptive incidents were witnessed. After the first weeks it appeared that distractions from noise and movement in other classrooms did not affect student behavior or ability to concentrate to any significant extent. Noise probably bothered the teachers more than it did the students.

In the kindergarten, often a difficult transition period for many children, the twenty-minute introductory sessions for students and parents appeared to have made life in school less threatening for many of the five-year-olds. There were few tearful incidents when they were separated from their mothers.

Overall, student behavior in the school was extremely good. This was probably as much a reflection on the socialization processes of the family and previous school experiences as anything that the school personnel either did or did not perform.

5. The first open house

On Thursday, September 18, a faculty meeting was held at lunch for dealing with administrative matters, as well as preparation for the open house scheduled for that evening. Brown began the meeting by reminding the teachers that Monday faculty meetings would be devoted to "professional growth" workshops. In an effort to save paper he announced that instead of sending an administrative notice to each teacher, Monica, the secretary, would post the notice above the sign-in board in the office. He emphasized that teachers were responsible for reading all notices, and that once teachers had signed in it would be assumed that they had read them. Other announcements included the following: field trips, special services, problems with lunch money counts, a reminder that in the event of absence plans for substitutes should be available, and a request that teachers conduct an inventory of supplies.

After these items Ellis asked: "Does anybody want to know anything about tonight?" The sole question was: "What is the format?" Ellis explained that in the gymnasium teachers would be introduced to parents and LAHA would make its presentation of a piano. Following this, the meeting would shift to the instructional area for teacher presentations. Then parents would return to the gym to begin organizing the PTA. He mentioned that it wouldn't bother him if teachers left after their presentations. He warned, however, that, "in four or five months I don't want handwriting that the PTA isn't good. Get involved now and we should be able to have a good resource."

The meeting continued with an announcement about after-school volley ball for teachers, an unsuccessful attempt to find representatives to WEA, schedule-change information from special subject teachers, and sign-up procedures for use of the gym. Ellis reiterated several "nuts-and-bolts" procedures: lunch-counts should be sent to the office quickly, attendance should be in after lunch, several people had failed to sign-in that morning. Finally, he asked if teachers had enough math profiles.

With the parents. Unaided by a microphone and over the rumble of the air-conditioning system, Brown greeted the parents and introduced the teachers by having them stand as he called their names. He then explained that in a short time parents could examine the teaching areas, until a bell rang to indicate that they were to reassemble in the gymnasium. Barbara Berger, who substituted for the president of LAHA, then presented a piano to the school. Immediately afterward, Ellis told the parents they were free to go to the instructional area.

Once in the instructional area there was some confusion; parents wandered from area to area looking for their child's teacher. The apparent disorganization prompted at least one parent to wonder if the school was "always this confused." Eventually, however, parents formed groups around their children's teachers and listened to descriptions of the daily educational program.

In the NBC team, Sally provided introductory remarks for her group, including an offer to answer any questions, because "there have been lots of fears about what the school was going to be like." Katie then quickly explained the daily procedures, which essentially involved three hours devoted to academic instruction , during which children rotated among teachers for lessons in reading, arithmetic and language arts. Other periods during the day, she said, were spent in learning centers where students worked by themselves on exercises designed to reinforce the earlier lessons.

Parent questions were mainly about the way rotation among teachers worked and the methods used for teaching reading. After a more detailed explanation, rotation methods seemed to be understood satisfactorily, but even after Sally described the reading program -- an interaction method -- and said that the primary benefit was that children enjoyed it, parents still had questions. In reply to a parent's questions about the math program, the teachers said they were awaiting the arrival of textbooks from England, but in the meantime were teaching from other materials.

One mother, in front of the entire group, asked Sally: "What has been going on all year [sic]? My child comes home and says she's done nothing and comes home with nothing." Sally suggested that they discuss it later in private. This discussion, which was semi-private, focused on misinformation the child had passed between Sally and the mother -- mainly, that the family was moving soon. The mother couldn't understand how this could have happened. The conversation ended after Sally explained that the year had just begun, that things were still being sorted out, and that more work would be coming home soon.

At another point in the presentation, Sally, who acted as a spokesperson for her teammates, told the parents that the children used notebooks for their assignments. When parents looked through their children's notebooks, many found that nothing or very little had been written in them, several asked the teachers what should have been in them. For the most part, the answer was that work was just beginning and, as a result, many children had not yet used their notebooks.

In the MTK team, each teacher (Priscilla, Wanda and Dori) met with the parents of the students in her own home base; they did not meet in a group or present themselves as a team. As in the NBC team, a main area for questions was the reading program -- which appeared to have been dealt with somewhat more convincingly by this group. Other questions ranged from concerns with milk money to Rob Goldman's query if the playground was supervised during recess, prompted by his first grade son's stories about playing football with eighth-graders. During the course of the evening, Wanda asked for assistance in the classroom and 25 mothers volunteered. Dori and Priscilla also received numerous offers of parental help.

In the BJW team, Norbert, in a highly animated style, explained his team's program in great detail to the parents while Rebecca listened (Glenda was not present). In fact, his presentation was so detailed that the bell indicating it was time to return to the gymnasium rang before he was two-thirds through his presentation. He quickly summarized, requested parent volunteers for the classroom and invited parents to speak with him and with Rebecca, which many parents did. After the meeting Norbert discussed how it went with Rebecca; they both agreed it was successful, but that Norbert ought to guard against becoming the spokesman for the team.

Parents drifted into the gymnasium where coffee and cake were being served. The half hour provided for meeting with teachers had not been enough; many parents remained in the instructional area to ask questions. Those parents in the gym -- about half -- conversed mainly about topics other than the school. One father, who attended most meetings and had earlier presented himself to Ellis as a representative of the Oriental community in Lincoln Acres, said he remained opposed to open space; he feared that too many children would not receive the attention they needed. Charles Frisch commented that he had not been able to get any information from his son on what was going on in school, consequently wasn't certain what to think of it yet. He said, however, that from what he saw, the school "looked good." For the most part, with the exception of a few skeptical questions directed toward the NBC team, parents seemed to be pleased with their introduction to the actual operation of the new school.

At 9:40 Ellis ended the formal part of the open house with the following invitation:

> I encourage you to come back when the school is in session. I know that may not be convenient for a lot of you but on a day off or some other time come by.

He then requested parents interested in joining the PTA steering committee to sign a pad so that they could be contacted when the group began to work, which would be soon. Until shortly after 10:00 p.m. parents continued to socialize in the school gym.

Teacher evaluation of the evening ranged from the majority, who thought it went very well, to a few who felt pressured. No teacher viewed the evening as unsuccessful. Jeanne, for example, thought that "The parents were enthusiastic and said that their kids learned a lot and liked school." Somewhat less positive was Jane's comment: "I answered all questions affirmatively. I felt a little hassled. The parents have high expectations of the teachers and students -- they always do." Elaborating on what he thought was a successful evening, Sam, in a discussion with Norbert and Rebecca, noted that the school had already received good reviews from Biddle and others such as David Hauptmann and Peter Rand, both principals of schools in Washingtonville district. He continued: "If we project a positive image we can help change the district." From the teachers' perspective, their first encounter with parents in the open school had been more positive than their contacts during the planning stages, especially during the summer workshop.

G. Analysis and Commentary

1. The state of the system

Generally speaking, the first weeks of school went rather smoothly, as is often the case when reasonably careful practical planning has taken place, and when all stakeholders -- parents, students, administrators, and teachers -- are, for the moment, suspending criticism and actively "willing" the new enterprise to get off to a good start.

These background supports for the success of the launch were augmented by a thorough and persistent "rule orientation" on the part of both Ellis and the teachers. Procedures for everything from appropriate entrances through lunch money collection, teacher sign-out, parking, record-keeping, meeting times, and fire drills were put clearly in place. And in the classroom, clear rules regulating noise-making, orderliness, disturbance of others, and cleanliness were set forth by teachers and enforced.

It seemed clear, however, that the rules served primarily as a way to ward off potentially chaotic situations, and not primarily as repressive devices to maintain administrative or teacher power. The approach to students seen in classes was predominantly non-regimented; a good deal of variety was permitted within the general constraints of the rules. The learning technologies used (small groups, self-paced learning materials as often as large-group lecturing or demonstration) were keyed to the diverse learning needs of individuals. The faculty had little uncertainty (probably because they had spent more than a month working together) about the commitment of their colleagues to this style of teaching, and they supported each other in maintaining a humane approach to students, one congruent with their initial vision for the school. Students, for their part, seemed to enjoy the school and function well within it, after some initial small disruptiveness, which was rapidly absorbed by teacher rule-making.

Certain aspects of the teaching technology of the school at this point are worth noting. First, the start-up was probably aided by the procedure of teaching children as relatively self-contained groups for the first few days, before the methods involving teacher division of labor were used. More coherence for children probably resulted, and a faculty with little prior experience in team teaching could move into it gradually. Second, the emphasis on objectives in each major subject area, plus systematic record-keeping, offered several potential advantages: sustained individual attention to children, closer monitoring of instructional progress by Ellis and Sam, and justification of the program to parents. (However, this sword could cut both ways: failure to keep up with the record-keeping system could, potentially, become evidence of "teacher incompetence" later on.) Third, the idea that each team could develop its own report card format supported the idea of the team as the basic working unit of the school.

Most of the teams appeared to be functioning well, with one exception. In the MTK team, conflict, self-defined as occurring at the "personality" and the "philosophical" level (both, it can be noted, notoriously impervious to improvement efforts), was already sharp. Though the team worked on their conflicts, and received requested help from Ellis and Sam, the results were uneven; the difficulties tended to remain.

The early and natural problems of adjusting to open space (dealing with noise, primarily) did not seem to be major for either students or faculty.

The investment of the teachers was clearly high. Two faculty meetings weekly were seen as important. Teachers came early and often worked until 5:30, winding up the day's work and preparing for the next; some came in on Saturday. No one complained yet of overload, nor of exceeding contractual hours.

Ellis' administrative style at this point seemed to emphasize several things: detailed rule-making; continued sharing of information in faculty meetings (though not major decisions, such as whether to have an open house, or a PTA, or to include interns); presentation of himself as actively interested in instructional matters (e.g., teaching several classes, as well as stressing the objectives and record-keeping); and continued emphasis on the teams as the basic instructional unit (e.g., decentralizing the report card decision to them).

2. Actualization

Generally speaking, there did not seem to be any substantial slippages between the plans made during the summer and their early implementation. The way space was organized, the preliminary lesson plans, and the actual details of the start-up seemed congruent with what each team had developed: the model of "operators as planners" seemed to be working fairly well. The potential loss of the computer, which Ellis had been counting on as a major monitoring device for individualized student progress, meant that he had to emphasize student record-keeping even more.

The communications workshop probably influenced the early implementation primarily by setting the norm that full internal communication was important (hence the acceptance of two weekly faculty meetings); it may also have made life in the MTK team more difficult by, as we have suggested earlier, setting such high standards for cooperation and communication within teams that options such as letting individuals go their own way were downplayed. It is of interest that the idea of a training workshop for parents was suggested; at least for Glenda, who proposed it -- as she had the communications workshop -- taking a "learning" orientation to parents' interests in the school was desirable.

3. Political stabilization

Teachers still felt rather hesitant, perhaps naturally, about involvement of parents (examples include Bert's comment about "having a weak heart", reservations about the PTA, resistance to involving parents in report card planning, and the fact that the faculty left it to Ellis to suggest what the format of the open house should be). Even so, after Ellis' and Sam's initiative in informing parents as to ways they could participate in the school, teachers from several teams, and Regina for the media center, did actively invite parents to volunteer their assistance in the instructional program.

It appears that teachers still (a) felt wary and potentially embattled; (b) wanted to avoid serious collaboration with parents. Their endorsing the idea of parent volunteers leads to our speculation that teachers also (a) believed that having parents as aides would keep them subordinate to teacher expertise; and (b) hoped that the parents' seeing the "reality" of the school would change their negative attitudes (i.e., would coopt them).

On the parents' side, there seemed to be a reasonable positiveness, a wish to believe the best of the school as it started up, along with a continued motivation to ask hard questions of the teachers (which the teachers in turn tended to experience as "hassling").

We should note here that in spite of Ellis' encouragement to the teachers to become more active and demanding toward the district in regard to the issue of protecting planning time, they did not do so. In fact, there continued to be difficulty in recruiting a faculty member to serve as representative to the district teachers' association, which had the prime role in negotiating such issues. Once again, we note that the teachers seemed to prefer a non-political, environment-avoidant stance.

Generally, political issues in relation to other schools, or to the central office, seemed minimal at this point; Sam briefly reported positive reaction from these parts of the environment.

4. Knowledge utilization

Perhaps the only illustrative incident here was that which centered around the issue of reporting to parents. Although "report cards," parent conferences and other devices to handle the parent-teacher interface when matters of student progress are concerned appear in every school in America, and a good deal of knowledge and technology exists, no explicit suggestion was made that it should even be referred to, let alone borrowed or adapted.48) Instead, Ellis suggested that the teams develop their own methods, citing a previous experience of his. We might infer that Ellis was more preoccupied with building team ownership and acceptance of reporting methods than with the technical quality of what was used -- or believed that internal resources were actually fully adequate to the task. It is possible, too, that he wanted to maintain an image of basing decision-making power with teams (and the faculty as a whole, who were tacitly being invited to approve the decentralized

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48) At a later meeting, both Ellis and the teachers did borrow report card ideas from other sources, but the initial stance was as described here.

policy): note that he said, "When I throw out ideas don't pay them any abnormal respect." He did protect a small place for the authority of position and expertise: "The only thing was that they had to be approved by the office, mainly on clarity, and in some cases the teacher hadn't had enough experience and needed some guidance." Though this is only one incident, it is not trivial as far as knowledge utilization (that is, its lack, here) goes: the problem of report cards is an important one for school-community contact, and much past knowledge exists.

5. Summary of key decisions

As suggested above, one of the key decisions during this period was that of decentralizing the report card issue to the teams.

The decision made by Ellis to launch the PTA, largely in conventional terms, and the associated decision to have an open house almost immediately, reversed the past tendency to avoid contact with the community until pressures mounted.

It is unclear from our data whether (and by whom) a "crisp" decision was ever made to invite parents to volunteer their services during school time. There are some relevant facts: willingness to work with volunteers was a selection criterion for teachers; the idea appeared in the summer workshop proposal; a question on this general topic appeared in the parent survey carried out at the beginning of the summer workshop; and Ellis reported at the last meeting before the opening of school that Sam was writing parents to explain how they could participate. Regina, and members of at least two teams, asked for parent volunteers, getting a "surprisingly" vigorous response. So it must have been clear at some point to the faculty that having parents directly involved during the school day was seen as desirable and legitimate. As we shall see, this "decision" was to have far-reaching effects.

Finally, the decision to have two regular faculty meetings a week, one for administrative matters and one for professional growth, was important: it assured a continuing space for faculty interaction and problem-solving efforts, and it dramatized Ellis' commitment to staff "learning" -- to professional matters, as contrasted with "nuts and bolts."

So, in general, the start-up of the Lincoln Acres school was reasonably smooth: the craft was off the runway and the journey begun. What next?

VIII. SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

Adjustments in a new organization, or, for that matter, in a chronologically mature organization, are to be expected. In any stage of organizational growth, change in social relations -- whether it is nearly imperceptible or complete -- accompanies installation of new technical procedures, personnel realignments or other adjustments aimed at bringing the operation of the organization up to standards that increase its goal attainment. The sources of organizational change may be either internal processes, or forces outside of the organization.

This chapter will provide a narrative of the changes in the social system of Lincoln Acres school that began shortly after the first open house for parents and continued until Christmas vacation. Actually, as we shall see in later chapters, the organization changed at a rapid rate throughout the entire year. Our analysis will discuss the sources and pressures for change and provide an explanation of them.

A. The Third Week of School

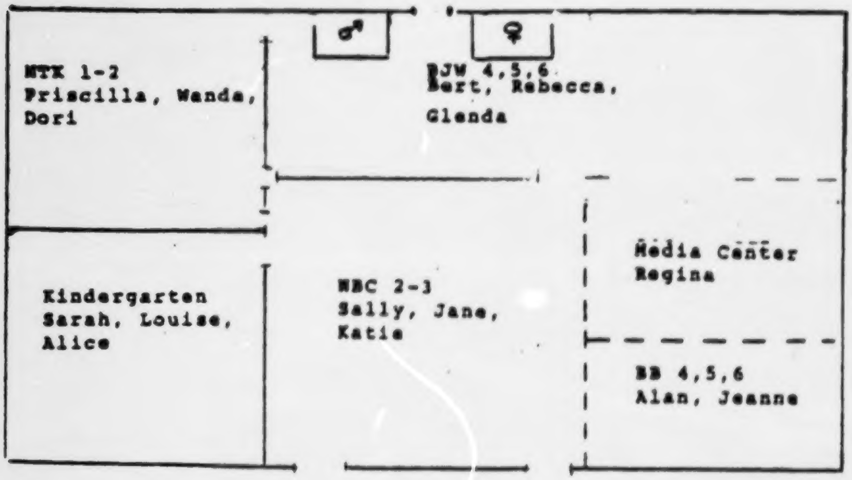
The week began with the same general instructional arrangements that had been used since school opened. Monday afternoon saw the first faculty workshop, a presentation of Cuisenaire techniques for teaching mathematical concepts led by Wanda. Most teachers had already used Cuisenaire rods in their classes but nevertheless found the workshop useful. Professional growth, a need that most teachers hoped to fulfill, was the main aim of this and other after-school workshops.

1. Changes in the teams' work

The BB cluster. During the early part of the week, the teachers rearranged the furniture in their teaching area so that it formed a wall, varying from waist-high cabinets to seven-foot tall closets, between their space and the space occupied by the NBC team. The rearrangement was an attempt to reduce the visual distractions that they had experienced from other areas. It also created a sense of privacy in their teaching area, though it did not reduce the noise level from other groups. Permanent library shelves also arrived during the week; they further reduced visibility between the media center and the BB and BJW teams. Overall, the new furniture arrangements had a minimal effect on teaching conditions; visual distractions were reduced but the more disruptive problem of noise remained. Diagram V illustrates the new furniture arrangements.

DIAGRAM V

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL FLOOR ARRANGEMENT, SEPTEMBER 26, 1975


♂
♀
NTK 1-2
Priscilla, Wanda, Dori
BJW 4,5,6
Bert, Rebecca, Glenda
Media Center
Regina
Kindergarten
Sarah, Louise, Alice
NBC 2-3
Sally, Jane, Katie
BB 4,5,6
Alan, Jeanne

——— = Floor-to-ceiling partitions
- - = furniture, shelving

The NBC team. In the NBC team, students were in small groups throughout the area working on a wide variety of teacher-directed, and self-guided learning activities. With the exception of some relocation of furniture and learning centers, no changes had been made in the area. However, the team was planning to begin a new phase of their program on the following Monday. Several parents had requested a more structured approach to reading; the change was primarily to satisfy their requests. The new program involved dividing the children into three groups of 27, with a teacher and intern for each group. Within these groups, which were heterogeneous, there would be small groups arranged homogeneously (by reading ability) for instruction in reading.49) Eventually, it was planned, heterogeneity would be re-established for instruction; in Sally's opinion, "elitism is a bad thing." The teachers said that they were

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49) NBC had spent the better part of the previous week testing their children's reading ability to enable this grouping.

"comfortable" with the parents' request, and felt that the program they had devised would be a good starting point, since parents could understand it easily.

Since school opened, numerous parents had visited the NBC pod while teaching was underway. A frequent visitor in the early weeks was Marie Bonomi, who was also a parent aide in the library. During the third week of school, Sally complained to Sam that Mrs. Bonomi had spent time looking through notebooks and papers of children other than hers without the permission of the teachers or the parents of the children involved. Sally also told Sam, "I feel like a monkey here with all these people looking at me." That day, in addition to Mrs. Bonomi, students from nearby State University were observing the school, which increased Sally's sensation of being under constant scrutiny. Sam suggested that the issue should not just be discussed privately, but should be put on the agenda for the next faculty meeting, and that a policy regarding visitors might have to be developed.

The MTK team. Team teaching in the MTK team was not flourishing despite attempts to solve problems the group had encountered. Toward the end of the third week, when the researcher asked Priscilla how everything was, she answered, "Good, all right, but they could be better." When asked, "How?" her succinct reply was: "If I wasn't here." Wanda, who wanted to avoid having the rest of the school involved in her team's affairs, explained that there was no team teaching in her group and that the problem was essentially Priscilla's uncooperativeness. Priscilla had indicated to her team members that, later in the year, she would consider team teaching. In the meantime, however, Dori and Wanda made plans that on the following Monday they would begin team teaching without Priscilla.

The other teams. BJW and the Kindergarten were experiencing no significant difficulties at this time. Occasionally, noise from BJW could be heard throughout the school. Regina had an introduction and short training session for about 35 mothers who had volunteered to work in the library.

In sum, during the third week of school three significant changes had taken place: the BB cluster had partially separated their teaching space from the rest of the school; NBC was to begin a new structure for their reading program; and team teaching in MTK was going to involve only two of the three teachers. One of the changes, the restructuring of the NBC reading program, was primarily initiated by influences from outside of the school -- the parents. The other two changes resulted from processes within the social system of the school.

B. The Fourth Week of School

1. Faculty meetings

Faculty meetings were the primary method of communication between the administration (including Ellis and Sam) and the teachers, especially during the early part of the year. Even though the team structure made for more inter-teacher communication than is the case for traditional schools, and though the open space encouraged informal contact, the faculty meetings, whether aimed at "administrative" matters or instructional issues with emphasis on "professional growth", were the main hub of communication for the school. Accordingly, they were documented as carefully as possible by the researcher.

The vocal music teacher conducted a Kodaly workshop Monday afternoon, September 29, 1975, so that classroom teachers could continue to teach it while she was on maternity leave. Teacher response to this workshop was positive; along with developing their musical skills they enjoyed themselves.

Topics of a lunch-time faculty meeting held on Tuesday included announcements concerning field trips, inventory sheets, fire drills (the first one was that afternoon), the gym schedule and a report by Bert that after he had asked each faculty member privately, he found that no one wanted to represent Lincoln Acres school in the WEA. Sam told the faculty that he would run the next Monday workshop, which would demonstrate the use of videotape in the classroom.

Ellis also announced that the PTA Steering Committee was meeting that evening. He invited the teachers to attend and prodded them, as he had on other occasions, by saying: "We need planners there. If we don't participate we'll be in no position to criticize them."

Ellis introduced another issue of some importance: earlier in the day a child had left school for home while school was in session. Ellis suggested that a sign-in and out procedure for students be installed to prevent that kind of incident. He added, "I'm not angry with you, I can understand the problems of keeping an eye on all the kids, but it's a public relations problem."

Another major item in the meeting was Sam's announcement that checklists for the writing and reading objectives would be ready by Thursday. Until now only mathematics objectives lists were in use. When Sam finished, Ellis continued with the topic of objectives lists by telling the faculty: "I have had a number of parents question the program. I think we now have the tools to meet with an upset parent." After other comments, including his mentioning that he would not be in town Thursday and Friday, Ellis said that since it was the last week in the month he would begin reading math profiles and start meeting with teams to discuss them. This prompted Alan to ask what should be marked on the profile: only what has been taught to the student, or what he actually knows? Ellis replied:

> Anything you know the kid can do. Don't let it bowl you over -- you haven't done that much in September. The parents need some assurance that the kid is getting some kind of uniform individual attention. O.K.?

There were no further questions about profiles, and after a few more announcements the meeting ended.

2. The NBC team responds to parents

The NBC team had spent substantial planning time the previous week, both after school and on Saturday. On Monday they implemented their new program. Beside reorganizing reading groups, they decided that Jane would be responsible for teaching mathematics the entire day. Sally would teach language arts, and Katie would be responsible for reading and independent study. The children were to rotate among the areas during the course of the day; each teacher instructed each student in her specialized area every day.

Despite the new format, complaints from parents about the reading program continued. Mrs. Bonomi, an early critic, had spoken to Ellis about the NBC reading techniques, and told him she was going to spend time in Sawyer school where she could see a "regular" third grade reading program. Just before this she had observed Sally teaching a lesson in which the children were asked to compare a horse and a cow and then write sentences on the differences between them. Mrs. Bonomi claimed that she could not understand how that exercise was a reading lesson. Both Katie and Sally viewed it as unbelievable that Mrs. Bonomi could fail to understand that reading was being taught in that lesson -- or to realize that most of the activities in school were actually teaching reading. Other indications of parent dissatisfaction with the reading program were less direct. For example, one student told her teacher that her parents had purchased reading and mathematics books, and gave her lessons at home. Ellis had spoken with Mrs. Bonomi and other parents, and told the teachers that he supported their efforts.

Along with restructuring their program, the NBC teachers decided to "brainwash" their students; they hoped that when parents asked if reading was taught during the day the children would be able to say that reading was involved in all school activities, and provide examples. The mechanism of "brainwashing" -- a term the teachers freely used -- was compilation of lists of areas by students and teachers which involved reading, followed by memorization of them. For instance, on Tuesday afternoon, an intern led all students in a recitation of the aspects of school that involved reading. These subject matter areas were then put on a large piece of cardboard which was hung from the ceiling in the center of the teaching area; the students recited this list. Sally and Katie, the teachers primarily responsible for reading, planned to continue the "brainwashing" technique as long as necessary.

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In this team, reaction to criticism by parents was fairly quick. Restructuring the reading program within the first month of school was a responsive act. "Brainwashing", also part of the response, seems to have been an over-reaction; it was to a large extent, contrary to a central principle of the school -- to promote individual differences among the students. Two sources of anxiety probably caused the quick response: the criticism from parents during the summer and possible feelings of low expertise, since all members of NBC had only taught one or two years prior to their coming to Lincoln Acres school.

3. Ellis' view

At this time, even with the problems in the MTK and NBC teams, Brown's evaluation of the school was positive. He was looking forward to seeing the results of the student profiles and provided this general assessment:

> It feels as though something good is happening in the school but I don't know what yet. I hope that it's something real and not just a mask over the mistakes that have been made in the past.

For Brown, the possibility existed, then, that past problems could push through the fragile, somewhat inchoate, sense that things were going well. Instead of denying the past, he seems to have felt it looming over the school. But, from his point of view, except for a few complaints (for example, Mrs. Bonomi's), there had been no real problems with parents -- the key factor in past problems -- and many had made positive comments since the school opened. Indeed, the PTA Steering Committee was to meet that evening to begin more active parent involvement in the school.

4. The PTA Steering Committee

Twenty parents had volunteered at the open house to work on the PTA Steering Committee. The first meeting was held on September 30, 1975 in the Lincoln Acres school media center. More than 20 parents attended, while Ellis and Regina Hanley were the only representatives of the school. Many of the parents present were those who had been active in earlier phases of the school's development, such as principal selection and passage of the bond issue. Some had been opponents of the emerging plan during the numerous summer meetings.

Those present were broken into smaller groups of about six to brainstorm goals appropriate for the PTA. The following list of goals was produced by combining the individual brainstormed lists.

1. Get teachers involved
2. Find out what's going on in the school
3. Do some materials evaluation

4. Curriculum planning
5. Continuing education at home
6. Cultural arts
7. Tutoring program
8. Student progress reporting...report card study committee
9. Newsletter
10. Fund raising
11. Speakers and programs
12. Recreation...after school and evenings...children and adults
13. Fathers involved
14. By-laws and officers
15. Representative to Board meetings
16. Safety and health study
17. Landscaping of school property

As is evident, these goals place substantial emphasis on the actual process of education, not only on fund raising and social activities. These parents viewed themselves as taking a fairly active role in instructional matters, though certainly not as supplanting teachers. In fact, an appeal was made that more teachers become involved in the PTA, particularly in the areas of materials evaluation, curriculum planning, cultural arts, tutoring, and student progress reporting.

Once the preliminary goals of the organization were brainstormed, it was decided that before organizing the association further, a meeting with presidents of nearby PTA's should be arranged to obtain more information on various issues such as fund raising, membership, and organization. A meeting for this purpose was set for October 7, 1975. The plan was that shortly after this meeting the PTA would be organized and committees formed. A few weeks after this was accomplished, the program would be presented to the entire PTA membership and officers would be elected.

C. The Fifth Week of School

Although Brown was not present for the first three days of the fifth week of school,(50) with the exception of visits by a few parents, everything went about as it had in previous weeks. The faculty workshop, which

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50) Including two days in the fourth week and three days in the fifth week, Brown was out of town for five continuous days. He was in New Hampshire for an appointment with his dissertation advisor and a visit to his former school. In his absence, Sam and Monica, the secretary, ran the school. If any policy decisions had to be made they were instructed to consult with David Hauptmann, the principal of Fernwood School.

concentrated this week on the use of videotape in classrooms, was held as usual.

1. The MTK team

On October 8 at 7:30 p.m., the MTK team held a meeting for parent volunteers in their pod. The 25 mothers who attended were introduced to the programs and materials through simulation of a typical school day. The teachers thought the session with parents went well.

The organization of the MTK team remained the same as it had been the week before; only Wanda and Dori were planning and team teaching together. Both of them found that during the day they talked infrequently with Priscilla, and there were no plans to include all three in the team. Wanda's evaluation was: "I feel good about things except for team teaching -- the place looks good, the kids are starting to read."

2. The NBC team feels pushed

"Brainwashing" continued in the NBC team throughout the week. According to Sally, the effort was only half successful: "The kids are learning when they are reading, but it's not working with the parents." Evidence of this was that on Wednesday afternoon Charles Frisch, whose son was a student in the pod, visited as a parent, not as a Board of Education member. He told the teachers that parents were having difficulty understanding the reading program. Additionally, he said he disapproved of rotating children from teacher to teacher as an instructional technique, but accepted the teachers' rationale for it. He also said he would have preferred their beginning the year with activities such as phonics, and putting less early emphasis on reading for enjoyment. Perhaps his most important suggestion, or request, was that the team plan to meet with parents in the near future to explain their program. Mrs. Bonomi also visited the team on Wednesday and requested a parents' meeting with the teachers.

Sally said that the team was being "pushed into a more structured reading program." In her opinion she and her teammates realized the need for more structure, but were taking their time with introducing it. Generally, the teachers felt upset and somewhat bewildered by the close parental scrutiny and criticism.

On Thursday morning, when Brown returned from five school days in New Hampshire, he met with the NBC team to discuss recent events. Ellis told them, somewhat abruptly, the teachers felt, that he too had noticed weaknesses in their reading program. Several decisions were made in this meeting: in approximately two weeks the team would have a parents' night to explain the reading program, on the following Monday they would begin phonics instruction, and Sam was to meet with them that afternoon to offer suggestions to improve the reading program.

NBC reacts. Every Thursday afternoon, because of the arrangement of special subjects, the teachers in NBC had almost two hours free for planning. On this Thursday, as noted above, they were to meet with Sam. Before Sam arrived, they discussed Frisch. Sally, uncomplimentary in her evaluation of Frisch, called him a "creep". She also cast doubt on Frisch's expertise in reading by claiming that his own son read below grade level despite his attempts to help him.* The conversation then changed; the teachers agreed that "the place looks like a pigsty" and they would clean it on Saturday. Eventually, the conversation returned to Frisch who was reviled again because he planned to visit the school on Monday despite the teachers' request that he wait. Their rationale for the delay was that the program was new.

When Sam arrived at 1:20, the first thing he asked was if the teachers needed any instructional materials. He then began suggesting elements of a phonics program, based, to a large extent, on what he had done when he was a classroom teacher. These included word games, charts, brainstorming sessions and so on. Sally, somewhat resistant, asked why the children should be taught things that they didn't need to know. Sam's reply was: "I always use the rationale that they might need it later on in junior high school." Somewhat later, he justified his efforts by telling the teachers: "Be able to say something to the parents that they want to hear, isn't hurting the kids and is honest."

Frisch and his criticism of the team then became the subject of conversation. At first, Sam said that Frisch should be listened to, but when others made uncomplimentary remarks about him, Sam agreed that Frisch was "uptight" and bothersome.

Sam offered a few more suggestions, and then said: "Can I tell you my bias? I like the walls. I saw it at A.B.C. and at Oxford.51) The walls give you a sense of place. The other walls should be arriving soon. I'm happy we changed to the 1-2, 2-3." After this aside, Sam suggested a meeting Tuesday after school to make phonics games. This was agreed to and the conversation returned to Frisch, Bonomi, other parents -- and to Ellis. The teachers complained to Sam that in their morning meeting Ellis had been rough with them. Sam defended Ellis by telling the teachers that he often found Ellis difficult to talk to early in the morning. "Ellis," Sam concluded, "has piloted us through a lot of problems. I don't think that one of the other people we interviewed for principal could have done it." After Katie commented that it was now time to support Ellis, Sally said that, nevertheless, she "felt put down this morning by Ellis when he said we were missing something in our program." The meeting ended, but before Sam left he told the teachers he was glad they were in the middle of the building so everyone could see the good job they were doing.

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* Biddle's view was that Frisch never recognized or accepted the real problem with his son.

51) A.B.C. is an open space school in Meadows, and Oxford is the school Sam taught in.

The role of the resource teacher throughout the school district was an ill-defined one:* it was neither an administrative position nor a teaching position. The resource teacher was to provide aid to teachers, but the problem centers on the meaning of "aid". As the summary of the conversation reported above suggests, Sam performed ambivalently in the resource teacher role. He apparently did not know what his duties were -- or, if he did know what they were, he never found a way of successfully translating them into action. Depending on the circumstances, he either defended Ellis and became his apologist, accepted the parents' criticisms, or joined the teachers in their negative comments about parents and Ellis alike. Maintaining a credible performance under these conditions proved to be difficult for him by the end of the year.

The NBC team was not particularly pleased with the way events had progressed in recent weeks. Alterations in their program appeared to be acceptable to them -- but not as a result of outside criticism. Nevertheless, they planned to take various measures to redesign their reading program to satisfy the critics. They also planned to have an open house, as requested by a few parents. We should note, though, that the first open house seemed to have left enough parents dissatisfied to have generated more parent visits and more criticism.

3. The School Board sets priorities

This week, the balance of Board membership was slightly altered, but not essentially shifted, by its election of a new member, Tom Hassfelt. (In late July, Michael Strassberg, a Board member who had supported the teachers during the reorganization meeting, had resigned.) Four of the six applicants for the position came from Lincoln Acres. In the final Board vote, at their meeting of October 6, Charles Frisch, Irena Farrell, and three other Board members supported Hassfelt; Sylvia Peabody, Estelle Hunter, and Gerrie Holden, who had earlier formed the Board opposition to the original Lincoln Acres school plan, supported Rob Goldman, who like Hassfelt was from Lincoln Acres. Thus the Board could not be said to have become, on balance, more negative toward the hopes that Biddle, Ellis and the faculty held for the school.

At the same meeting, the Board endorsed a resolution that made the teaching of basic skills in the district's schools the highest priority.

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* Biddle's view is otherwise: the resource teacher role is generally defined (as facilitative of teachers' work), but defined differently from school to school according to the principal's wishes. He pointed out that the "resource teacher" role was new to Ellis.

Basic skills as defined by the Board included: obtaining data, solving problems, thinking critically, and communicating effectively. The Board also decided to have math and language areas (reading, writing, speaking, listening) taught before other basic skills.

Part of the resolution asked the superintendent, with the assistance of teachers, to develop objectives in math and language arts along with a means of measuring whether or not these objectives were being reached. The plan was to be presented to the Board by November 3.

Frisch said that the basic skills emphasis would not supplant goals already established by teachers, but would show teachers what district priorities were. He said:

> We know there is a significant amount of basic skills training now in the system, but we're asking schools to list and evaluate the effectiveness of that training.

While this resolution did not develop a unified curriculum for the entire district -- something that Biddle had opposed since he came to Washingtonville -- it began laying the foundation for movement toward a standardized curriculum. In its weekly editorial the Courier proclaimed: "Basics are Back!" After lauding the Board's new policy toward basic skills, the editorial continues:

> It's about time in this and other districts. Teachers. students and parents have all complained that language arts skills are sadly lacking in many "bright" students who graduate from the local high school with top scores. Good high school age writers often don't know the difference between the use of the words "threw" and "through"; spelling among many high school students is atrocious. Parents of elementary age students complain their children's spelling is not corrected because teachers fear correction will stifle creativity.
>
> So now the pendulum swings back. The rote learning of the past is called into the present to save the citizens of the future. Admittedly the swing could turn into a destructive backlash. The move of the 1960's toward meaningful, creative, relevant, innovative education should not be lost in this age of recession.

4. Frisch's views

Though the NBC teachers wished to minimize Frisch's input, he certainly was not an ordinary parent. In addition to his statuses as Board of Education member, visiting professor of education in the graduate school of education at the State University, and father of a child in the NBC pod, Charles Frisch was also the director of the State's Right to Read Program in the State Department of Education. As director of the Right to Read program one of his duties was that of cataloguing techniques of reading instruction throughout the state. An article by Frisch titled, "Some practices in the teaching of reading in the state," a condensation of a book published by the State Department of Education, appeared in the October, 1975 issue of the state educational association's journal. This was about the same time Frisch became critical of the reading program in the NBC pod. Although the article is based on survey data from schools throughout the state and does not deal with Washingtonville directly, it offers an opportunity to examine some of Charles Frisch's findings and opinions about the type of reading instruction he saw as appropriate in elementary schools.

On the question of reading activities within the classroom, Frisch's data indicated that although there was a diversity of student grouping practices in the state, the traditional procedures of grouping within the classroom in the primary grades, and grouping within-and-between classes at the intermediate level, were the most common. Individualized instruction, homogeneous, ungraded and departmentalized approaches were used much less frequently. Thus, traditional educational practices formed the most prevalent pattern. Frisch did not say whether he considered this beneficial or detrimental.

Findings on materials used in classrooms "indicate that the predominant material used in most elementary classrooms to teach reading is one basal [reader]. Use of multiple basals supplemented with workbooks was significantly less frequent." Somewhat surprising to Frisch was the finding that less than two percent of teachers used phonics materials as the principal instructional method, "even with the recent resurgence of interest in phonics instruction."

A basic purpose of reading instruction, according to Frisch's article, is that it "should include definite emphasis on the application of reading skills to content subjects, starting at least in fourth grade." His findings showed, however, this was not being accomplished in two thirds of the schools in the state. In Frisch's view, this was a "definite area of weakness in the elementary reading program."

Frisch summarizes his findings:

> While a wide diversity does exist within the state, clusters of similar responses occur quite frequently in each area reported. Generally these clustered responses indicate a reliance upon classroom procedures that have been developed over the years and found to be effective in teaching reading. This is not to say that the newer ideas or techniques recently suggested by the literature are not being used. It is just that they are not as widely used as are those practices which teachers have been using for years in the classroom.

As in other parts of the report, Frisch did not comment on this conclusion. But while he did not support the "traditional" emphasis in reading instruction that he found, he did not criticize it either. As we have seen above, he did criticize what in his opinion was the underutilization of phonics and inadequate emphasis on the application of reading skills to other subject matter areas. Frisch's failure to criticize traditional practices tempts one to conclude that he finds nothing unsound about them, though he falls short of outright endorsement.

5. The faculty meeting

At lunch-time Thursday there was a faculty meeting. Ellis, who had just returned from New Hampshire, began by explaining the budget for the coming year; he asked teachers to give him, in writing, any supply or equipment requests they had. Then he turned to recounting the PTA Steering Committee meeting, and the list of goals parents had generated. When Ellis finished reading the list Priscilla asked, "This was their list?" Ellis replied:

> This was brainstormed by them. This is a first list. Some of them are taking a pretty close focus on kids and program. Frankly, I felt a little embarrassed being the only staff member there.
>
> Priscilla: Frankly, I didn't want to go. I was busy and they have given us a rough time in the past.
>
> Ellis: We had people there from the state and county PTA's as outsiders. They are young and aggressive and have to be taught that they can make us uptight.
>
> Regina: I saw a lot of change in the two meetings. [In] the first one they were very hostile and in the second they said they have to get everybody involved. The more involved they are the less hostile they become.
>
> Ellis: I found that when I went to the teas. When there was no Board member there they were very hostile. When the Board members were there it turned to "what can we do to help." They stopped saying things like: "I hope so and so meets with a bad accident." When I was there at the PTA it was less hostile.
>
> Priscilla: Maybe we can rotate going to the PTA?
>
> Ellis: Well, I had a feeling and I have the right to share that feeling. I felt embarrassed.
>
> Linda: Do they have the right to deal with curriculum?

> Ellis: I feel it's legitimate for them to have input but not to make decisions.

A long silence followed. It was broken by Alan's speculation that the reason teachers did not attend could have been the fact that the meeting was held at night. Ellis said, "It could have been that -- but most likely not in 17 cases." The meeting turned to other topics.

Ellis announced that the state assessment tests would be given soon and that the next Monday workshop would focus on report cards. A set of procedures for the new hot-lunch program was also discussed.

When Ellis asked if there was anything else to talk about, a variety of small items came up: they included a question about how often teaching areas were to be vacuumed and several complaints about the lack of cleaning of bathrooms. Ellis made a note of the complaints and said that he "got the hint." After a spontaneous discussion of rainy-day lunch room procedures developed into an argument between Sam and the gym teacher over whether Sam was qualified to spot gymnastic apparatus, Ellis ended the meeting by yelling: "Hold it -- this is not constructive!"

D. The Sixth Week of School

1. Teaching/learning overview

Except for the changes in the NBC team, instructional activities had remained largely unchanged since school opened. There was a moderate amount of pupil control effort in several teams; it was not repressive or continuous and seemed effective. Each pod had numerous activities during the day. In the intermediate areas several activities were usually going on at one time: up to now multiple activities had been the practice mainly in the primary areas. Student-teacher interaction was frequent; teachers were usually actively engaged in teaching a group of students, not grading papers or doing clerical work while the class did seatwork. The self-directed exercises used were usually aimed at reinforcing material presented in teacher-directed lessons. Materials were well used; so was equipment, like the videotape machine. Interns, SWEP students and parent volunteers worked alongside teachers throughout the school. Overall, the school was fairly well organized, but somewhat noisy.

This was a week, however, when parent visits and criticism increased a good deal, and when several teams began encountering more difficulties in their work.

2. NBC under scrutiny

As expected, Frisch, along with other parents, visited the school on Monday, October 13, 1975, which many parents had off work, since it was Columbus Day. The furniture in the NBC teaching area had been re-

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arranged over the weekend so that it was more clustered, producing small, well-defined instructional areas. Attached to each area was a sign explaining its use, for example, as a reading center or a science center. During his visit, Frisch asked the teachers why certain objectives did not appear in the student profiles they were using. The teachers answered that it was an oversight and met later in the week with Ellis to discuss adding the objectives. Sally, who was the most vocal member of the team, was somewhat puzzled by Frisch's visit. She commented: "I don't know where he's coming from," but added "We've changed our program and we're pleased with it; the changes were needed. Ellis is familiar with our program and supports it fully."

But other parents also registered complaints about the NBC reading program during the week. The most serious one was a charge that a child had been placed in the incorrect reading book -- one that she was in at Christmas time the previous year. The child's mother claimed that an eighth of the year had already passed, and her daughter had not learned anything. The NBC teachers regarded this parent as being overly alarmed, particularly since they felt the past weeks were not that critical.

Influenced, however, by the parental criticism, the NBC team decided that instead of holding a parents' night as originally planned, they would produce a pamphlet explaining their program and send it home with students. This was done, apparently, to avoid more face-to-face contact with parents, and limit further criticism.

3. The faculty works on report cards

Monday's workshop was for work on the construction of a system for reporting to parents. Ellis reminded the group that they had agreed on splitting the primary and intermediate groups during the summer for the purpose of planning a reporting system. It was decided that the product by the end of the workshop would be a preliminary specification of information to be contained in the report card. Priscilla asked, as she had in the early days of school, what the results of the community survey had been concerning report cards. Ellis couldn't remember the percentages but reported that few people wanted numbers or grades, that no one had mentioned "pass/fail" and that there was no "overwhelming" percent who wanted a narrative form of report.52) The faculty then split into two groups; the intermediate one was led by Sam and the primary by Ellis.

The group led by Sam had a wide-ranging, somewhat disorganized discussion. There was some uncertainty on what they wanted to report to parents, and a high degree of uncertainty on how it should be reported. Sam pushed fairly persistently for an objectives checklist type of report similar to one he had used in Oxford school. There was a lengthy discussion of whether grades such as "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory," "outstanding" should be used, as versus a narrative approach.

The primary group generated a list of topics to be covered in the report card card which included work habits, reading and social

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52) The latter conclusion is not at all supported by the present data, see p.86.

attitudes. Ellis proposed that categories such as, "at-grade-level," "less-than-grade-level," and "more-than-grade-level" be used. The teachers sat passively during much of Ellis' presentation, but Priscilla, Dori, and Wanda were more vocal than the members of the NBC team. At one point, Priscilla asked Sally how she felt with the discussion. Sally responded that she was basically uncomfortable with the grading system, since one of its consequences for the students was that parents would take ownership of the child's learning. Ellis' comment was that what Sally said was "tragic," because she would never be happy with any reporting system. Sally responded: "I see we have to do it but the whole experience is uncomfortable." More discussion of Ellis' idea followed until about 4:45. As with Sam's role in the intermediate group, it appeared that Ellis exercised the dominant influence, had decided before the meeting on the general outline of the report card, and elicited subject areas and suggestions from the teachers in an attempt to involve them.

Overall, the impression was that each member of the group felt ambivalence between making a "professional" response to the grading problem and the desire not to get into excessive amounts of work. Additionally, the solutions discussed to the grading problem were not particularly innovative, even though the discussion drew on sources such as a well-known state commission report and practices at other schools.

4. MTK problems continue

Early that week, Ellis thought he might take advantage of the Center for Policy Research offer of matching funds to provide consulting help for the MTK team. In his view, the team had delivered instruction fairly well, but there were a number of innovative techniques they could have been using. The main obstacle, as he viewed it, was Priscilla's unproductive interaction with Dori and Wanda. By now he had had four meetings with the team to try to solve their problems. He felt these had been of limited help, and that Sam's efforts had produced little change. In the operation of this group there were only two recent changes: parents were working as aides, and Priscilla, who was still having problems with noise, had begun wearing ear plugs in school. No movement toward increased team teaching or joint planning had occurred.

5. Stress in the BB cluster

Toward the end of the week, Jeanne complained privately to the researcher that she had a "vague feeling of discomfort" in the school. She was uncertain if it was only because of the newness or whether the openness of the school contributed to it. She attributed part of her discomfort to the fact that she and other teachers felt the community had high but unclear expectations; it was difficult to know whether or not the teachers were meeting them. She explained:

> I feel as though I'm on a merry-go-round and can't get off. I'm here from 7:15 to 4:40 every day and do work at home, but it still seems like there is more to be done. I'm getting tired of it and my husband wants me to stop it. But I don't feel confident.

She said she had spoken with Bert, Rebecca and Glenda and they felt the same pressures.

When asked if the BB cluster had taken any steps to solve their problems, she answered that they had not. She said she had confidence in Sam and liked him, but for some reason unknown to her would not approach him with the problem. Nor would she consider bringing her problem to Ellis' attention -- because, in her opinion, "he doesn't care, wouldn't know what to do and is satisfied as long as too many parents don't see him." So communication within the BB team and between them and the administration, was not particularly good. Even though the team seemed to be one of the more successful in the school, with no complaints from parents, they were experiencing strain. It was not surprising that they decided to turn to parents for rewards. They scheduled an open house for Thursday of this week for parents of children in their pod, hoping to get some positive feedback to reinforce their efforts.

6. Sol Levinsky consults with BJW

During the latter part of this week, Dr. Sol Levinsky, a professor of education at Reade State College, a supervisor of three of the student interns in Lincoln Acres school and a consultant to the Washingtonville school district since 1967,53) met with the BJW team and interns at their request. The team had asked him to provide feedback on whether they were meeting the needs of individual students. Levinsky's technique was to observe the class for nearly the entire day, videotape an interview he conducted with several students, and then discuss his observations with the teachers.

Levinsky's view of the team was that they were meeting their (and Biddle's) objectives of providing individualized instruction. However, he preferred to see more children working in groups. Responses to this and to several other observations -- which stayed close to the theme of individualization -- were somewhat defensive. For example:

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53) Levinsky was also a friend of the research project director's, and one of the consultants used by the Social Architecture project in other schools. He did not act as a project consultant in Lincoln Acres school, feeling that his past and current work with Washingtonville would preclude it.

> Levinsky: One of the things I saw missing for me -- if I look at this as a culture -- was a unifying theme for this thing bringing it together. A unified purpose or identity. I admit that this is a highly personal thing.
>
> Bert: You came on a bad day. The fourth grades don't go to the nurse for Human Growth and Development because of state law. This made them stand out as a group.

As we shall vividly see later, Levinsky's observation that the group lacked a purpose was incisive; when criticism from parents increased, the rationale for the program the BJW team had developed did not prove entirely convincing.

The BJW team spent time discussing the videotape, what Levinsky's role could be in the future, and philosophies of learning -- for example, whether children learn best in groups or individually. In this last area there was disagreement between Sol and Bert; Bert thought learning was an individual act and Sol argued that it could also take place in groups. Arrangements were made for Levinsky to meet again with the interns to probe further into the teaching problems they experienced. The meeting ended with all involved declaring that it had been a worthwhile and fruitful exercise.

During the course of the day, Levinsky made several other interesting observations to the researcher. He seemed surprised that Ellis and Sam were considering using a consultant to help the MTK team. It was his impression that they wanted to "run their own ship". In relation to this, Levinsky commented:

> Biddle is a nice guy but he gives with one hand and takes with the other. He gives autonomy to the principals but no one really takes it. Ellis is young and cocky enough to take Biddle seriously and run his own school, the others don't.

7. The faculty meeting

By mid-week, numerous parents had visited the school. They had observed the NBC and BJW teams; some parents claimed their children could not learn in an open space setting. Scheduled and spur-of-the-moment conferences were held with Ellis to discuss problems parents had perceived. Several parents had also requested appointments with teachers. On Thursday morning alone, four parents visited the school to talk, and to examine their child's cumulative school record folder.

At the Thursday lunch-time faculty meeting, after a brief discussion of fire drill procedures, Ellis introduced the topic of visitors in the school.

Ellis: One of the things I want to discuss is the huge number of visitors we're having in the building. There are three things: Should we have a form that a lot of schools have, that is, "How to be a good visitor?" There has been a problem in at least one pod -- what about others?

Regina: Bad visitors don't follow guidelines anyway.

Ellis: The other thing is would it be useful to have a particular day to come to school?

Wanda: A limited number of people. I think they would all take advantage of it.

Ellis: We wouldn't broadcast it.

Priscilla: I like Wanda's suggestion. Some schools have a father's day on vacations that we don't have.

Bert: One day a week will have us responding differently, I always do when an evaluator comes. You might also have the community thinking we're having them come only on a "show" day.

Priscilla: Do we have a general rule that visitors go to the office?

Ellis: Yes, it's a Board policy.

Bert: The other day, Barry's boss /Miles, the research project director/ was here and I felt awkward with this man taking notes. I didn't know what to say. Or, Mrs. d'Onofrio today. I didn't know if she had been to the office. With Barry's boss I looked at him and thought it was all right.

Several sub-group discussions concerning parents erupted in the group. Monica took the opportunity to ask Ellis about the correct way to respond to parents with transportation problems, among other things. Shortly afterward, the group refocused and the discussion continued.

Sarah: Could we set up a sign and have them check into the office?

Ellis: That's what we'll do and they'll get a name tag at the office. If they don't have a name tag you can ask them if they've been at the office.

Jim: Are we still going to have rules for visitors?

> Dori: The other day I had some parents come in and I kept teaching. I felt a little awkward though and I didn't know if I should stop and talk to them. I didn't. I hope they didn't go away with the wrong impression and it would help if there is a clear rule that says teachers are to continue teaching.
>
> Jeanne: I was in a school once where visitors had to fill out a form when they left.
>
> Ellis: That's Board policy and we'll start to do it.

The conversation concerning visitors and appropriate ways to control them ended here as Ellis abruptly changed the topic to cleaning matters. He told the teachers that there were problems with cleaning the school; another custodian had quit the night before. He continued:

> I've looked at the areas and they are messy. I don't think it's good training for the kids to leave the place so dirty. There are lots of large things left on the floor. Would you want your vacuum cleaner to try to pick up crayons and erasers? A general rule should be that if not, it should be picked up by hand.

Eventually, the matter of cleanliness in the school would become a major issue dividing -- or used to divide -- the teachers and administration.

The meeting continued with routine announcements about physical education equipment, and relocation of bicycle racks from the front of the building to the side. After these, the subject of parents recurred. Jeanne explained that Mrs. Maggio, a parent of one of her students, had asked her to talk to the teachers about the PTA. Mrs. Maggio's message was that she and other parents would like to have the teachers participate in the PTA; they couldn't understand why teachers didn't attend. Jeanne reported that she answered that teachers "were tired of the hassle and of being cornered by parents and having to explain our programs." To this, Maggio had answered that not all of the people in the PTA were "activists"; she suggested that even if teachers continued not to attend meetings, it would be useful to have a list of teacher concerns. Jeanne said that she would solicit teacher suggestions and give them to her. The teachers decided to give written suggestions for the PTA to Jeanne; they said that their previous contacts with Mrs. Maggio showed she was "a nice person". In an effort to promote further participation, Ellis reiterated an earlier proposition:

> Please don't be timid about the process. If a parents wants to have a conference with you, tell them, this is a PTA and not a conference -- which can be arranged.

Ellis began to end the meeting, but teachers had other issues. Among them were theft of materials from the building, plans for Halloween parties, and a decision to have the regular faculty meeting at lunchtime on Thursday. Ellis also announced that there would be no workshop the following Monday.

8. BB cluster parents' night

On Thursday evening, dressed more formally than during school hours, the teachers greeted parents as they arrived for the open house. Parents walked through the space, inspected student work on the walls, books and other instructional materials. For the most part, what they saw was arranged as it was during the typical school day.

When the flow of parents slowed -- 35 adults and 20 children were present -- Jeanne began the presentation. She announced that the sections of the program would include a description of a typical day, an explanation and organization of ways parents could work in the classroom, and finally, "honest" comments from parents about the activities of the pod. Jeanne finished by emphasizing the long hours and hard work that were spent on preparations for school.

Using charts and 25 slides, the teachers presented an abbreviated version of the typical day. With the overview completed, a spelling lesson was explained in depth. It was stressed that the spelling was coordinated with phonics and reading. Jeanne said that both teachers were responsible for all the students, and that they tried to see each one every day.

Index cards were distributed to parents, and they were asked to write their names and addresses, along with days they would be able to come to the school. A teacher said: "We'd like to have as many parents in our space as possible." On the reverse side of the card, parents were asked to indicate if they had any talents or abilities (such as cooking, Spanish, macrame) that they could use in leading "interest" groups during school hours. Then they were asked if there were any questions.

> Mother: I know about parent participation -- I've seen it before. What does it do for children?
>
> Teacher: We'd like parent input.
>
> Mother: (same one) I wonder if it isn't time for them not to be with parents. I also don't like them being taught by parents. I taught in high school and don't feel qualified to teach young children. Maybe we need parents in here to clean up this junk and to do clerical jobs.
>
> Teacher: Maybe I wasn't clear. They can do a lot of chores.
>
> Teacher: Clerical work, etc.

> Mother: (same one) I've been in situations where the kids say "the mommy did this and that."
>
> Teacher: They can do the clerical work and other things.
>
> Mother: (same one) Not many parents will want to do the dirty work.
>
> Teacher: The basic thing for us is to open up the class to parents.

After this exchange, for which several parents later privately apologized, Jeanne asked for questions about the program. There were only a few queries: about reading, the report card and the daily schedule. These were not hostile and did not start any debate or discussion.

A teacher said that if there were any other questions they could be asked after the meeting. "Right now we'd like to have your honest reactions. What do you think about our program? How do you feel? We need your reactions." Parents' comments were:

> Mother: I'd like to say that I'm grateful for the notes that come home. You always send thoughtful notes telling me what is going on in school. The kids like it and I like what you're doing.
>
> Father: My boy is happy and seems well motivated. But I don't know how to evaluate what he's learning. But as for his adjustment here I'm happy.
>
> Mother: I'd like to say that all the kids I know are adapting very well. That means they must be learning.

These were the only public reactions to the teachers' efforts. When parents spoke among themselves after the presentation and to the teachers they made other positive comments. No parent, except for the one who was skeptical of parents in the classroom, were critical of the BB cluster's efforts. Both teachers were pleased with the parents' reactions.

E. The Seventh Week of School

1. A visit from the superintendent

On Tuesday, October 21, while Ellis spent the day in Boston, Biddle visited the school. He observed the NBC team and talked with its individual teachers. Afterward he commented that they were doing a good job, but had made a mistake in not meeting parents' needs first; many parents had called him to complain about deficiencies in the team's educational program. Sally, speaking for the team, countered Biddle's criticism, saying that she thought meeting students' needs came first. Jane's assessment was that the problems would be solved if parents simply had more information about the program.

The outcome of Biddle's visit was a recommendation by Ellis on the following day. He suggested that the NBC team supplement their current plan of sending a notice to parents explaining their program by reinstating the open house originally requested by Frisch and others. The team accepted this, and made plans to split the parents into two groups, attending on different nights. Ellis and Sam were to help the NBC teachers prepare a presentation, to include videotapes of classes. The NBC open houses were scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday of next week.

2. The PTA Steering Committee

Spurred by Ellis' open criticism of the faculty for their non-participation in the PTA, and by personal invitations from parents, several teachers attended the next PTA Steering Committee meeting on October 21, 1975. Ellis had flown to Boston the day before and was still at the World Series.

Among the dozen parents present were Sy Golden, Sam Schwartz, Barbara Berger, Marie Bonomi and Sylvia Peabody.

At this early stage of the development of the Lincoln Acres PTA, many of the organizers were people formerly active in LAHA. For example, Barbara Berger, who was still active, had been the education committee co-chairperson at the time of Ellis' appointment. Golden was the second president of LAHA, and a co-author of the LAHA constitution. Once the school opened, the PTA replaced LAHA as the community organization with greatest interest in education.

Golden, who ran the meeting, introduced everyone and distributed copies of the proposed PTA by-laws. These were to be discussed and voted on at the first general membership meeting. The next issue was nominations for offices in the PTA. Although several offices had multiple candidates, others were either without candidates or non-contested; some time was spent on ways to induce people to run for office. Golden said:

> Hopefully one of the members of the faculty -- or more -- will take a position on the executive board. This is a brand new school and we can make new tracks in the snow if we want. It's exciting.

This comment led to a lengthy exchange between Golden, who wanted to know what could be done to get teachers involved in the PTA, and the teachers. Sam advised the parents that a possible way of getting teachers involved would be to have a PTA representative talk at a faculty meeting. After more discussion, which in a somewhat random way recycled to the parents' desire to get a teacher on the executive board, Lee

Whitmore said she would be willing to run for either president or vice-president. Bert then offered to contact teachers to tell them about PTA meetings.

Seeking assurances, a parent asked if more teachers would be at the next meeting; he was concerned that they might not have an opportunity to influence the by-laws. Golden said that he thought there would be teachers present, and Bert volunteered to distribute copies of the by-laws to teachers for their reactions. The parents seemed to be satisfied with this arrangement.

When the meeting ended, coffee was served and several parents talked with teachers. The teachers listened politely and there was no apparent friction between the two groups.

After the meeting Regina told the researcher:

> I have seen a change in the Steering Committee since they began. They are now less militant, less concerned with curriculum and evaluation and [less] into the technical aspects of setting up the organization. Also, at one meeting someone suggested that they wait for making policy decisions until the entire group gets together to give everybody input.

3. The faculty meeting

Upon returning from Boston, happy that the Red Sox had won the World Series, Ellis held the regularly scheduled lunch-time faculty meeting on Thursday. The primary topic of the short meeting was parent-teacher conferences, scheduled for November 3, 4 and 5. These were half days for all schools in the district, when required conferences with parents would be held. Ellis asked the faculty to consider how the conferences should be organized. After some discussion, it was agreed that there would be 15-minute conferences with each parent (or set of parents). Other issues discussed were if any teams intended to meet with parents as a team, and scheduling problems for families with multiple children in the school. Ellis was asked if the student profiles (student record forms) should be shown to parents during conferences. He answered that they were to be used, and that in instances where a child had unusual problems he would discuss the case with the teacher before the parents arrived.

During the meeting Glenda said she had had a problem with a parent aide from another team observing her that morning. She continued: "This disturbed me. She asked who I was. She said she had permission from you." Ellis replied:

> I wasn't in the building this morning. If they're going somewhere else they should check with the office. This is district policy.

In response to Dori's remark that some parents refused to obey the policy, Ellis said, "If there are problems I'll talk to them." Later in the meeting, another member of the BJW team, Bert, also made criticial comments about parents. In reference to scheduling parents for conferences, he observed:

> In my dealing with the parents most have been really good but some are bitching and I don't want to go out of my way for them.

Toward the end of the meeting, Ellis repeated his message from the previous faculty meeting concerning the cleanliness of the building.

> A couple of areas of clean-up are just way out of line. I'm hiring and firing clean-up people weekly. If the piece of paper on the floor is large enough to pick up the children should do it. Books, erasers and other things are constantly found on the floor and shouldn't be. If they don't pick up before they leave you are teaching them an awful habit. If you want to see it, go to the high school where it's really bad. They must learn to clean up.
>
> Another problem is the bathroom. They are running wild in there. They have too much time. I've had a couple of incidents in the boys' room that you just wouldn't believe.

He then reminded them that at the end of the day the chairs in the instructional area should be stacked or folded so that vacuuming would be possible.

Bert then announced that he would leave a copy of the PTA constitution in the teachers' lounge so that changes in it, if any, could be made. Other issues discussed were the Tine tests to be administered by the school nurse and Sarah's question if there were objections to the kindergarten's parading through the school for Halloween.

Several times during the meeting teachers talked among themselves; their attention was not on the topic under discussion. Ellis interrupted and regained their attention. On one of these occasions he said:

> The rumor went around last Thursday that I was in a bad mood. I wasn't, but please stay with me. I come out of these meetings and find that people haven't been listening.

As this quote indicates, to Ellis these meetings were an important mechanism for running the school; they were the primary means of distributing information throughout the faculty. He viewed it as the teachers' responsibility to know what decisions had been reached. No public minutes or records were kept.

4. The MTK team situation persists

The problems that had developed in the MTK team were still evident. After a period of relative harmony (Wanda and Dori were still planning their work separately from hers), the situation worsened. Ellis, who acknowledged that his early attempts at supporting Priscilla and her team had not been effective, did not think things could be improved, because he felt Priscilla could not acknowledge the problems.

Ellis decided not to use a consultant to help the MTK team. Instead, he intended to tell Priscilla that she was not meant for the Lincoln Acres type of education, and that she should look for another position for the following year. At the same time he told Wanda and Dori, Priscilla's teammates, that in the next year they would not have to be in a team with Priscilla.

5. Ellis' view of the school and community

Situations like those in the MTK and NBC teams made Ellis feel, he said, as though he was "firefighting." He spent entire days from mid to late October talking on the phone to parents, and meeting with teaching teams and individual teachers who were having problems.

Chief among his concerns was that Charles Frisch, who had been a supporter of the school, was now one of its most critical opponents. Ellis no longer knew what to think of Frisch by late October. He complained:

> One minute I hear an ex-teacher talking, another an ex-administrator, another an ex-superintendent and then the Director of the state Right to Read program. At times he even sounds like a concerned and bewildered parent. At others like a Board member with a thousand hidden agendas.

Frisch, as we have seen, was one of the parents who wanted NBC to have an open house. But in Ellis' view, by the time of the open house "Frisch had given up on the school." This assessment was based on the fact that he had threatened to transfer his son to Fernwood school. Biddle, however, persuaded him not to -- but the threat of a transfer remained.

It was Brown's opinion that the effect of Frisch's demands on NBC were not harmful, but that he rushed them and created a crisis atmosphere. He continued:

> I believe enough in democracy to let the community have a say in the school. If what they want is a mediocre education then that's what they'll get. They certainly are not getting the best education that we could give.

In general, Brown's view was that the community complaints created a feeling among the staff of being "fed up." The only teachers to receive any praise from the community were Alan and Jeanne, who had asked for it: "they had to go begging." Reflecting on his own position at this time, Ellis said he was "taking steps to straighten out my personal life and see where I'm going." He wondered if the role of principal was the right one for him, and how long he would remain in Washingtonville. Apparently, he too, was becoming "fed up" with the community complaints.

F. The Eighth Week of School

Along with the usual activities of the school, two teams held open houses for parents this week on three separate nights. NBC divided the parents of their students into two groups and met with them separately on Tuesday and Thursday night. BJW met with the parents of their students on Wednesday night. Both teams held these meetings at the request of parents who, for a variety of reasons, either felt they needed more information about the educational program their child was receiving -- or frankly viewed the educational program as inadequate.

1. The first NBC open house

By 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 28, 1975, approximately 40 parents were waiting in the media center for the NBC open house to begin. Compared with the two parents who had arrived early for Alan and Jeanne's open house, this appeared to be an eager group.

The teachers and interns sat on the right front side of the audience, and talked among themselves; before the meeting there was no contact between parents and teachers. After 15 more parents arrived, Ellis began the meeting at 8:10. He introduced the teachers and interns and presented an overview of the evening's activities, which would include description of the math, reading and language programs, simulation of the daily activities of the classroom, an opportunity to ask questions and a videotape of the classroom activities. Ellis concluded his introduction by saying:

> One thing we can't do tonight is discuss your individual child's progress. We don't have the time. Fortunately, next week we have teacher conferences. Notices will be sent home giving you the details.
>
> The reason we're having this meeting tonight is that in the beginning of the year we received 78 kids. We have

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> since become familiar with them and made changes to meet their needs. We have also had comments from parents and made changes to meet the suggestions made, many of which were good. We're pleased with our program but we basically found that we need more emphasis on basic skills: reading, math and language skills.

With charts displayed by an overhead projector, Ellis reviewed the structure of the math, reading and language programs, including objectives for each area. He elaborated on each area minimally and said almost the same thing that appeared in the printed material given to each parent. Following (Chart 8.1) is the section on reading from the mimeographed pamphlet parents received.

CHART 8.1
DESCRIPTION OF READING PROGRAM, NBC TEAM
2-3 Pod Reading Program,October 28, 1975

The Reading Program, together with the Language Program and Spelling, contributes to a rounded experience in reading and language growth for the students. While reading is discussed separately here, it must be understood as a part of the whole program which includes vital parts of reading growth in the areas of language and spelling, rather than all of it just in reading alone.

The 2-3 pod includes readers who are just learning how to read all the way up through students who read easily and independently above the 3rd grade level. To cope with this range of reading performance, a variety of basal readers are used to give students at each level challenging experiences in comprehension and vocabulary. The daily lesson includes reading with a teacher and a follow-up (independent or sometimes teacher-led) activity that reinforces the content, vocabulary or some other aspect of the day's lesson. Formal handwriting practice is worked into the follow-up.

Besides the basal readers, many books are available for the children to choose to read on their own that have reading levels designated on them. (For example, a piece of tape of a certain color may be used to indicate books of approximately the same reading difficulty. Teachers and students become familiar with which color is suitable for each individual student to use in selecting material for independent reading.)

In his oral presentation, Ellis emphasized that each student read aloud to the teacher every day and that reading was actively taught to each student every day.

Ellis then divided the parents into three groups and assigned each to a teacher who explained her teaching responsibilities once the group

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arrived in her section of the instructional area. Jane's specialty was math and science: Sally's and Katie's were reading and language arts. At predetermined times, the groups of parents were asked to move to the next teaching area until each group had heard each teacher.

In these sessions the teachers elaborated what had been said by Ellis. They also demonstrated or displayed various materials used by the students. After their presentations they answered the few questions the time permitted. For the most part, these parents were not critical of the teachers. Noise was an issue, however, since even though only three people were talking at one time -- the teachers -- they could all be distinctly heard in any section of the teaching space. One parent asked Ellis if problems were created by noise and was assured that there were none.

Once all three groups had experienced each subject matter area, they were asked to return to the media center where they were permitted to ask questions. The following is a sample of the questions and responses.

> Mother: My concern is with the security of the building and grounds. In transition periods I'm afraid of kids leaving the building. Is there someone responsible for them?
>
> Ellis: Oh, sure. The teachers always keep track of the students.
>
> Father: In order to measure their learning will they be compared with others in the state?
>
> Ellis: We already had the state assessment program in here. It is for the 4th, 8th and 12th grades. The district has standardized tests district-wide and they have national norms.
>
> Same father: When these are scored can we see the results?
>
> Ellis: Yes. You have the right to see them. The California test is given in May. It might take some time before the results reach us, but it should be before the next school year.
>
> Father: Does this give you a true fix on how the school operated for the first year?
>
> Ellis: No. The California is an achievement test. In a neighborhood like this they'll do well. It doesn't reflect the school. I've seen good schools in bad neighborhoods do poorly.

Father: What criteria will you use, then?

Ellis: The profile that the teachers use, which I read for every child every month. They have specific criteria on them. Can the child multiply by two digits? Maybe there is a problem with the child or the program. This is checked every month.

Mother: I find a problem with the lack of work that comes homes. I can' follow the child. I'm a working mother and I can't come to school during the day to find out what is going on.

Sally: Mrs. Kelly, we have an abundance of paper now and we'll be sending things home. We didn't understand this at first as a parent need, but now we do.

Ellis: This is the kind of thing you can get at parent conferences.

Father: Why was so much time spent on testing the children when you have the test results from Fernwood last year? I can understand one week [of testing] and then moving on.

Katie: We found a large discrepancy between the Fernwood information and our own.

Ellis: Achievement tests are not always accurate. They are not good for placement purposes. What we got from Fernwood was where they left off and after two months of time for children to forget things. I will agree that it took a long time and we hope to make it shorter.

The question period ended with what appeared to be the exhaustion of parental concern. Ellis announced that if they desired they could stay and view a videotape of classroom activities. Most parents stayed and enjoyed what they saw, especially when their own child was on camera.

For the most part, the questions were not critical, nor did they directly concern the teachers' methods of instruction; instead they focused on general school policy and gross measures of achievement. Katie, surprised that the questions asked "didn't relate to us," was somewhat relieved that the first open house was over. But she worried that the parents scheduled for the next one would be more critical. Sally was pleased, and thought that some parents were beginning to understand the program. She too did not look forward to the next one, because of the parents involved. Indeed, it was true that none of the parents who had become visible because of their efforts through LAHA, the petition, or more recent complaints about the school had been present at this first open house.

2. The second NBC open house

Anticipating a more critical group of parents for the second open house on Thursday, the teachers prepared themselves in somewhat more depth. For instance, Katie read one of Charles Frisch's books on the teaching of reading and announced:

> I'm going to use his terms. One thing I got from it is that he wants teachers to be highly organized. His book is heavy on detailed teacher planning and he says plans should be made for two months in advance.

In fact, whether it was intended to serve as one or not, the first open house was a practice for the second one.

The setting and organization of the second open house was the same as the first. There was an important difference, however: several influential critical parents -- Frisch, Peabody, and Bonomi -- were present. They, along with others, asked more probing questions of the teachers than had the first group of parents.

As before, Ellis gave a general overview of the program. He then divided the parents into three groups for teacher lectures and demonstrations designed to explain the instructional areas.

In Sally's group, after she finished her presentation, which was the same as in the first open house, there was time left for parents to ask questions.

> Father: In this area how much time do you spend with individual children?
>
> Sally: I'm not sure what you mean.
>
> Frisch: Maybe it could help if you explain the daily schedule. They don't all come at one time?
>
> Sally: Twenty-seven children at a time. They are divided up between Marcia, the intern, and me. Eventually it will be three groups. Some will work on follow-up (independent study).
>
> Father: You still haven't said how much time you spend with the children.
>
> Sally: I would say it's a half hour.
>
> Frisch: There are two basic areas here. Could you give us an idea of what happens in a week or a day? Do you work on both skills every day?

Sally: Monday through Wednesday we work on basic skills, Thursday and Friday on language. I work with Katie very closely.

Father: So that if you teach something, Katie reinforces it?

Sally: Yes.

Mother: I think the overall common concern of the community is that the children are doing their own thing. I expect them to have some regimentation. They love the school and doing their own things. But I don't see the results. She comes home and has no idea of what's going on.

Sally: There will be work going home now. We didn't understand that in the beginning. Every Tuesday you can expect a spelling list -- we have a test on Friday.

Mother: Good.

Father: Do you feel the way that you are teaching will work, that it's a valid approach and doesn't need to be changed?

Sally: Sure, but I'm always looking for ways to grow and change.

One father remained after the group switched to Katie's area and questioned Sally further on her relationship with parents.

Mr. Kahn: You mentioned in your presentation that the homework was to appease the parents. Does it help learning?

Sally: Both.

Mr. Kahn: My concern is with the kids, not the parents.

Sally agreed with Kahn but then explained the pressure from the parents: "I finally resolved myself to the fact that the children aren't going to learn if the parents aren't happy."

Mr. Kahn: It seems a little neurotic to me. Thank you.

After Katie's explanation of her part of the NBC instruction, the parents, led by Dr. and Mrs. Frisch, asked the same sort of questions they had posed with Sally: the daily and weekly schedule, homework and the mechanics of the reading program. In this latter area Frisch and others asked detailed questions about the methods Katie used to determine the appropriate level of reading instruction that each child received. Katie answered that placement was made on the basis of the child's work last year and tests given at the beginning of the current year.

The group reformed in the media center for an opportunity to ask more questions of the staff. The two basic areas asked about were the amount of instructional time each child received, and the methods that would be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching. The following exchange occurred near the end of the 15-minute meeting.

> Father: How do you evaluate the program?
>
> Ellis: I teach regularly and go over the individual profiles.
>
> Frisch: How would the overall program be evaluated?
>
> Ellis: Annual tests. They evaluate our record keeping. State assessment tests and the California tests.
>
> Frisch: Do I take it that there will be a California test at the end of the year?
>
> Ellis: Yes, it's Board policy.
>
> Frisch: Are you going to use it?
>
> Ellis: Yes. But I value it less than a criterion-referenced test. A PRI and a PMI.
>
> Schwartz: Wouldn't the California test be useful until you can have two years of them?
>
> Ellis: They should have more weight but you're right.
>
> Mrs. Bonomi: What is a PMI and a PRI?
>
> Ellis: I'm sorry. I used them because Charles is a specialist and that's his language. A PRI is a Prescriptive Reading Inventory and a PMI is a Prescriptive Math Inventory.
>
> Father: Can we see the results?
>
> Ellis: Yes, it's essentially an audit system.
>
> Mrs. Bonomi: So you're saying that an independent audit won't be made until the end of the year?
>
> Ellis: Probably not.

In a short time the questions ended and the group watched the videotape of class activities. Overall, this group of parents asked more specific questions about the activities in the team, and had more educational expertise than the first group. Many of these parents had actually spent a substantial amount of time in the school observing the class.

After the meeting the teachers seemed tense but cautiously hopeful that some problems had been resolved. Jane received compliments from several parents about her teaching.

3. BJW open house

In between the two NBC open houses this week, BJW, one of the intermediate teams, held an open house for the parents of their students. The source of the open house was a mixture of parental pressure created by frequent visits to the school and the teachers' desire to quell parent concerns by further explaining their program.

Ellis was not present, and Bert presented an overview of the school day to the 60 parents present. He advised them, as had Ellis at the NBC open houses, that questions regarding individual children should be deferred until parent conferences, which were to be held the following week. The parents were then divided into three groups, each one assigned to a teacher, for a simulation of the activities of a typical day. As in the NBC open house, at a designated time the parent groups switched to another teacher for an explanation of another part of the program. As in NBC, the time after each of these sessions was short and permitted few, if any, questions by parents.

When the "mini-day" or simulation was over, the group re-formed in the center of the teaching area and the teachers asked if there were any questions. The questioning that followed focused on the reading program and methods of evaluation and placement, much as it had in the NBC open house. Here, however, the tensions created between the parents and teachers were difficult to contain. At one point, on close questioning by parents, Bert said that he did not have to answer their questions and threatened to leave the meeting until he was persuaded to stay.

The difference in level of overt hostility in this meeting, compared with the NBC meetings, probably stemmed from the absence of Ellis or any other administrator. At the other open houses Ellis acted as a traffic manager and buffer between the parents and teachers.

Several parents later told the researcher that the BJW open house had had negative effects on their relationships with the team members and their evaluation of the BJW educational program.

G. The Ninth Week of School

The major activity of this week was parent-teacher conferences. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, all teams scheduled 15-minute meetings with each set of parents during the afternoon and evening. Children were dismissed at 1:00 p.m.

1. BJW problems with parents continue

At least one parent conference was less than a positive experience. Mr. and Mrs. Golden found that, from their perspective, the BJW teachers did not know what progress, if any, their child was making. The student record sheets had only been used once -- the entry was for a few days before the conference -- and there was no work in spelling and language. The conference ended with Glenda's saying that other parents were waiting but with the Goldens still unsatisfied with her report. Mrs. Golden refused to leave even after Glenda left. Aware that there had been problems, Rebecca Barone spoke with the Goldens, and together they re-examined the child's work. After this experience, Golden said: "The rumors started to make sense. I'm a believing guy." Apparently, other parents had similar, though less severe, experiences in their conferences, causing them to raise further questions about the BJW team.

Later in the week, Golden met Bert at a LAHA-sponsored Halloween party. During their conversation Bert explained that large mass meetings such as open houses were not the best way to communicate with parents. Golden asked if he thought small coffeeklatches with six people would be more useful. Bert said he did, and Golden invited him to speak at one he would arrange. A coffeeklatch was set up for the following Friday.

2. Ellis confronts Priscilla

Early in the week Ellis met with Priscilla and told her that he did not consider her to be fit to teach -- in effect, writing off her competence, though early in the year he had considered her one of the more valuable staff members. Priscilla, upset by this, consulted with an attorney to find out whether documenting her communications with Ellis would be necessary if either side wanted to take legal administrative action.

3. Parents request transfers

During this week, several parents of children in the BJW and NBC teams requested that their children either be transferred to another class within the school or, (in the majority of NBC cases) to another school. It is not clear that these requests were directly caused by the parent-teacher conferences, but it is likely that they, along with the recent open houses in these two teams, were a contribution.

At this time, Ellis was successful in persuading parents not to transfer their children. But he dodged making a final decision in several instances by telling Alan and Jeanne, to whose class many intermediate parents wanted to transfer their children, that they should meet with the parents and reach a decision. Alan and Jeanne, however, felt uncomfortable and said it was not their role to make such decisions -- which should be made by someone in an administrative position.

H. The Tenth Week of School

Ellis decided to take this week as a vacation from school to work on his dissertation. Only the first three days were involved, since no school was scheduled for Thursday and Friday to enable teachers to attend the annual meeting of the state educational association. Even so, he chose to be absent at a critical moment in the formative period of the school. Several of the teachers viewed his absence as avoidance of the difficulties facing him and the school; no steps had been taken to alleviate the pressures caused by the requests for transfer of students to other instructional programs.

1. Priscilla's decision

By this time, Priscilla had evaluated her situation and announced to the researcher, "Maybe you should know that I'm job hunting." With a radiant smile, she explained that her decision was based on the conclusion that she had made a mistake in thinking that open space meant open education. As far as she was concerned, a self-contained classroom would be more suitable for open education; she didn't need the support of another adult in her classroom (a primary benefit of open education, as Ellis viewed it). She also complained that the noise created by other classes was a hindrance to effective teaching.

In her meeting with Ellis, Priscilla had suggested that for the next year she team-teach with one other person, and that additional walls be erected. Ellis told her that her idea was unlikely to happen, in part because of the expense. From her point of view, Ellis was "talking out of both sides of his mouth," and denying problems. She felt the school was in disarray. If she found a suitable teaching position, it was her intention to leave Lincoln Acres school as soon as possible.

Dori and Wanda enjoyed working with each other, had increased their team teaching (still at a relatively minimal level) and, overall, although disturbed by the state of affairs in the school, found their own situation to be fairly good.

2. Transfer requests increase

By Wednesday, the last school day of the tenth school week, at least six parents in the NBC team had requested a transfer of their child to another school, and nearly 25 parents of children in the BJW team had asked for a transfer, either to the BB team or to another school. In the great majority of instances the transfer request was for Fernwood, the school the children had attended the year before. In some cases, transfer requests were for other public schools in the district, or for the nearby parochial school.

On Wednesday, Bob Biddle, the superintendent of schools, visited Lincoln Acres school. He commented:

> The parents are really uptight. It is probably because of the economic situation, but wouldn't you know it, they are doing just the wrong thing for their kids. When they should be loosening up they get tighter.

3. The state of the school

During the week, Sam confided to one teacher that he was uncertain what his role was, he wasn't clear on what his duties were, and he didn't know if he was an administrator or a teacher. When the researcher asked Sam how things were going -- a question which had invariably gotten a cheery, smiling "Just fine. Real great" -- he soberly answered, "So-so," shrugged his shoulders, and walked away. Similarly, Regina, who was ordinarily highly active and talkative, worked listlessly in the media center. Glenda, when asked how everything was, simply rolled her eyes and shrugged her shoulders.

In sum, by the tenth week of school, serious, persistent problems had arisen in almost all parts of the school. The teachers were depressed, many viewed Ellis as being inadequate to the task and, indeed, as avoiding his responsibilities. Furthermore, they did not see an end to the problems; their major strategy for controlling parent doubts and criticism, the open houses, had instead increased parental concerns and pressures for change. Certainly, the numerous requests for transfers were not a sign of community confidence in the school, or in the school's immediate future.

It should be noted that by this time an important change had taken place in the parents' criticism: during the spring and summer they feared what could possibly happen in the as yet unopened school. Now they were objecting to what they thought was actually happening in the classrooms. From a critique of the abstract concepts which formed a philosophy of open education, they had now moved to a critique of many daily practices in the school, based on close observation of classrooms.

A sense of inability to control events, coupled with disillusionment, spread among the faculty; the actualization of the initial vision of the social system of the school as it had been developed during the early planning proved to have serious defects. Jeanne captured both aspects well in her statement:

> A lot of the information in the school is from rumors. For instance, that point about children wanting to transfer started out as a rumor. Sam told Regina what Ellis had told him, that's the way a lot of things happen in this school. We talked about being open and honest, but that's not the case. At the old school I thought that nobody even pretended, nobody said they were going to be open and honest, everybody was closed and uptight and did their own thing and I was more comfortable that way. At least you know where you stood. Here there are lots of rumors.

4. The coffeeklatch with BJW parents

School was closed on Thursday and Friday so that teachers could attend the state teachers' association convention. On Friday evening, the small meeting Sy Golden had arranged took place. Although the meeting was to have been a small one, close to 20 attended. The purpose was to hear parents' concerns which would then be taken to teams, who would address them and set up a timetable. He had invited Sam Schwartz, Tom Hassfelt (the new Board member), Joe Miller, Abe Hertz, Sandra Waters and several others, all of whom had children in the school. The researcher was not present but gathered impressions from parents.

At the meeting, which lasted for more than three hours, Bert, the only member of the team present, tried to answer the parents' questions. For the most part, they were the same questions which had been asked at the open house. One of the parents present at this meeting, Sam Schwartz, recalled it this way:

> There was food on the table but no one ate until the end. We heard some good answers but bad news. At one point things were so bad that everybody's stomachs started to growl and everybody reached for the food -- this is what I call 'gastrointestinal reaction.'
>
> Bert answered the questions but it was horrible: he [Bert] said the answers were horrible. Our hearts went out to him, as an honest person he couldn't answer well.
>
> The host asked us to stop talking at one point because he couldn't stand it. He wanted to change the topic...
>
> Toward the end of the meeting the Board member present casually said, 'How about report cards, are they coming out soon?' Bert said that he didn't know and that, 'we can't get together on it.' After this everybody started to eat again.

Reluctant to leave relations between the teachers and parents in such a poor state, Golden asked Bert to talk with the members of his team and contact him again on Monday to see if another meeting could be arranged. Bert, who was ill on Monday, called Golden later in the week and told him that he had spoken to Biddle and Ellis about the problems. Bert also told him that he thought the team was getting organized, and that he would discuss his conversation with them.

There were several other attempts to have another small meeting between parents and all of the teachers in the BJW team, but because of a variety of events, one never occurred. One contributing factor was that during the week of November 17 through 21 the entire BJW team and their students were at Rolling Ridge, an outdoor education center. But at one point, when a parent asked when there would be another meeting with parents, Bert replied that there would be one "when the team had something constructive to say." This chain of events, among others, contributed to the fact that Golden and Schwartz and several others approached Brown to ask for a transfer of their children out of the BJW team.

I. The Eleventh Week of School

As in the weeks immediately preceding, stressful interaction between the school and the community continued; the conflict between the two groups intensified. The Board of Education, under pressure from the community -- including several of its own members -- scheduled a meeting for December 1 (two weeks away) to discuss the problems with Lincoln Acres school. Strains within the school organization also increased.

1. Individual faculty members meet with Ellis

Early in the week, Ellis asked that the teachers meet for private conferences with him by Thanksgiving vacation, which was to begin on November 26. The purpose of the conferences was unclear to many teachers. Several thought that they were not needed,54) but that a public faculty meeting to discuss school problems would be useful.

One of the teachers who felt this way, Dori, prepared a list of 36 problem areas that she was willing to talk about with the entire faculty. The list, which she presented to Ellis, ranged from problems with bicycle racks to proposals for the arrangement of the school for the coming year. Some of the problems she identified were:

- -- status of walls, school playground
- -- idea that parents can transfer children whenever they choose

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54) In fact, Ellis did not meet with all teachers as proposed.

-- attitudes of "boss" displayed by secretary and janitor -- wondering sometimes who's running the school?
-- lack of communication on this re: person in office to help teachers???
-- janitorial service -- usually poor
-- faculty meetings? 1-2 faculty meetings a week work load too much. Monday optional: if Monday no Thursday
-- lunch room atmosphere

For the following year she suggested:

-- no 1-2, suggest more coordination of K-1 programs
-- personally, for 50 children two teachers (2-3, 3-4)
-- better system for dispensing supplies, art, gym equipment

This list is fairly comprehensive. While it does not accurately reflect the concerns of several teachers, it does echo the general discontent that most were beginning to feel and express among themselves.

2. Virginia Vitelli's letter

On November 17, 1975, Virginia Vitelli wrote a letter critical of the school to Ellis and forwarded a copy to Bob Biddle. Vitelli, a graduate of a local elite women's college and former researcher at a large military installation, was also a former corresponding secretary of LAHA, and had applied, unsuccessfully, for the vacant Board of Education seat that Tom Hassfelt was appointed to in early October. The letter, because of its critical tone and its late arrival in the midst of other problems, is reproduced in its entirety in Chart 8.2.

Ellis mimeographed the letter and placed a copy in each teacher's mailbox. No explanation or other commentary accompanied the letter when the teachers received it late Wednesday and Thursday morning. In fact, the usual method of school-wide communication, the faculty meeting, was cancelled for both Monday and Thursday of that week, ostensibly because the entire BJW team (including interns) was at Rolling Ridge.

Teacher reaction to the letter varied along a continuum ranging from bewilderment to anger. Louise had asked Katie what she thought of the letter, and was surprised to find that, although she was mentioned unfavorably in it, Katie did not view it as a personal attack on her; she said that Mrs. Vitelli had spoken with her previously. Louise, however, did regard the letter as a strong personal attack on Katie and considered Katie's evaluation of it very peculiar.

CHART 8.2
VIRGINIA VITELLI'S LETTER

Dear Mr. Brown:

It has been made clear to me during several visits to the Lincoln Acres School that my daughter Julie cannot survive either scholastically or physically in the present environment.

At Fernwood, which she attended for her first three years, she was considered by her teachers to be a very good student. At my recent conference with one of her teachers, Ms. Neustadt, I was told that she is average, working "on grade level." This is too drastic a change in scholastic ability to be accurate. A more probable explanation for her present level is that the teachers do not inspire, challenge or urge her to achievements she can make. Under circumstances of lack of control by the teachers, where there are no requirements and no expectations placed on the students most of them, if not all, are quite willing to absorb whatever they can as effortlessly as possible. I consider the school to have failed in this regard.

The school has also failed to provide a secure environment where the parents can feel confident the child will not be injured in any way. The condition of the playground, the Lincoln Acres Park, is well known. Very little has been said about the lack of security in the building itself. It is possible for an unauthorized person to enter the building at any time during the school day and cause harm to students or property. No one makes any attempt to stop intruders or question strangers. Also, I have seen children wandering around and out of the school building with no supervision.

The entire situation reflects mismanagement, poor organization and an overemphasis on experimentation. I am sure that these concerns are not mine alone. There must be immediate and visible changes made to accommodate all the children adversely affected by the present situation. It is not my desire to transfer my daughter to another school but to see these changes made in our neighborhood school.

Very truly yours,

Virginia Vitelli

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3. Board members visit the school

In the middle of the week Board members Tom Hassfelt and Gerrie Holden toured the school at separate times. Hassfelt, whose son attended the school, inspected the instructional area for some time before anyone inquired as to who he was or what he wanted. He talked to the teachers about the lack of control of outsiders entering the school.

During this week Charles Frisch commented to the researcher that there were, "all kinds of cross currents" concerning the school.55) Michael Karalis, who, because of business obligations was unable to take an active role in community affairs, observed that the school "looks good now." Six months before, Karalis had been concerned about the school and expected it to fail; at that time Frisch had been optimistic.

During the week, Vitelli's letter, the visits from Board members and other problems were not discussed much among the faculty. Judging from their sparse comments and sluggishness in the classroom, Dori's succinct analysis of the school seemed to have been accurate: "Morale in this place has hit the pits."

4. The first general PTA meeting

In the middle of this week, on Wednesday, November 19, the first general membership PTA meeting was held in the gymnasium of Lincoln Acres school. The main item on the agenda was the election of PTA officers. Along with this, Regina held a book fair in the media center, where parents could purchase inexpensive paperback books for their children.

Approximately 175 parents attended the meeting, along with 11 faculty members. After Ellis greeted the group and gave a brief history of the PTA Steering Committee, he read the major sub-section headings of the proposed PTA constitution and asked if there were any suggestions for changes. One minor change was requested and incorporated, and was followed by a unanimous vote to adopt the constitution.

The next business of the meeting was the election of officers. Ellis read the rules governing PTA elections and asked for nominations from the floor. Listed on a chalkboard in front of the gymnasium were the names of candidates presented by the Steering Committee's nominating committee.

President:	Herman Burstein Sandra Waters Sy Golden
Vice-Pres:	Lee Whitmore Jim Peabody
Recording Secretary:	Beth Johnson Jane Katz

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55) Frisch also asked the researcher in passing if reports of his findings would be made available. The answer was that they would be eventually, and that there was no agreement at present on who would get reports, and how. Frisch accepted this explanation.

Treasurer: Bobbie Hoffman
Anthony Bonomi

Corres. Sec: Leta Milstein
Martha Joncey

Immediately before Ellis asked the candidates for each position to speak, and before further nominations were accepted, Sandra Waters withdrew:

> When I volunteered, there were no others. Now, two well-qualified men have joined and I think we should have a man as president for the first year.

There were no other nominations for president.

Burstein, in his speech, emphasized that he had been a teacher in Hamilton, the largest city in the state, and was an attorney. He ended his short address by saying:

> I know that some of the people here have gripes because of the way the school was put together. I don't personally, but I think they should be represented.

When Golden spoke he stressed his position as the attorney for the Washingtonville Board of Education. He gave a long speech on how the school and community should cooperate and claimed that parents in Lincoln Acres were eager to take an active role in the school. Finally, he mentioned that the had obtained professional landscaping plans for the grounds around the school and the atrium.

Nominations were requested for vice-president, and Sandra Waters was made a candidate for this position. Lee Whitmore was the first to give a campaign speech. She said only:

> If I am elected to this political office, I would be one teacher on the executive committee.

Then Jim Peabody (Sylvia Peabody's husband) stressed his experience as a former teacher and conviction that fathers should become involved in schools. Sandra Waters explained her previous experiences in PTA's.

No other candidates were nominated for the other positions. With the exception of the candidates for treasurer, who talked at some length about their experiences with handling other people's money, the campaign speeches were extremely short. After all candidates had presented themselves, Ellis instructed the parents to vote. While the votes were being tabulated, coffee and cake were served.

Fifteen minutes later Ellis announced that there was a tie between Jim Peabody and Sandra Waters for vice-president; another vote would have to be taken. Ellis, annoyed that Lee Whitmore, the only teacher to run for office, had been rejected by the parents, walked to the back of the gymnasium after making the announcement, and told Alan and Louise, "These parents can't do a thing right. This will cost them dearly!"

A short time later, Ellis announced the final results of the election: the president was Sy Golden; vice-president was Jim Peabody; recording secretary was Beth Johnson; corresponding secretary was Leta Milstein, and treasurer was Anthony Bonomi. Immediately afterward there was an installation ceremony, led by a representative of the county PTA. This ended the PTA meeting, but Regina's book fair continued.

J. The Twelfth Week of School

Transferring a child from one school to another in mid-year -- even from one class to another -- is a serious matter for both parent and child. The process is disruptive for the child: the daily routine is broken, friends may be lost, and a temporary decline in academic progress may occur. For parents, transfer is an inconvenience; new transportation arrangements must often be made, and bureaucratic procedures have to be followed. So for both parents and children, the process of making the decision to transfer to another school or class is emotion-laden, especially when it is happening under circumstances of conflict like those at the Lincoln Acres school.

On November 24, 1975, Charles Frisch, who had previously threatened to transfer his son from the NBC team to Fernwood school but had been persuaded by Robert Biddle not to, turned his threat into a reality. Soon after, six other parents transferred their children from NBC to Fernwood school and several parents in BJW began asking for transfers. All this happened in a three-day period (Thursday and Friday there was no school because of Thanksgiving vacation), one week before the already-scheduled Board of Education meeting on the problems of Lincoln Acres school. Since Frisch had been a central figure in the school and school district, his reasons for transferring his child will be examined in some detail. We will also review the reasons other parents had for transferring their children, based on project survey and interview data.

1. Frisch's reasons for transfer

For Frisch, transferring his child to Fernwood school was the "second most difficult decision" he ever had to make -- the first most difficult was choosing between two jobs -- and one that he delayed making because of his position as a member of the Board of Education. The basic reason, he said was "a feeling that the school wasn't going to get any better and that it didn't teach him." He continued:

> Every time you went up there you got a song and dance. I was an administrator, I can sympathize, but I'd get my tail in the classroom and you'd see change. We didn't see the changes. But they worked their tails

> off -- I saw them there late at night. But maybe there was no leadership from the principal, resource teacher or superintendent. Probably a lack of leadership did it. Not having team leaders was a structural mistake.

From several visits to the school, both informally and during open houses, he concluded that there were things wrong; complaints he and his wife had heard from neighbors were not without foundation. For example, at the NBC open house the teachers told the parents they were using a reading program called MOPPETS. Frisch had never heard of it, and checked with friends in the State Department of Education to find out if it was a "total" reading program. He was told it wasn't.

Frisch said many specific things influenced their decision: lack of continuity in homework; the "brainwashing" effort; absence of criterion-referenced testing; and their son's unhappiness and low productivity. Beyond these, Frisch said that in his view (and, he felt, in that of many other parents), the NBC team was "coming between us and our kids." Mrs. Frisch elaborated.

> I thought they had the wrong values. Right at open house they said "we want to be friends with your child." Chuck didn't need that. They should have started with where the kid was.

Overall, Frisch found that the teachers were not able to do what they said they were going to do; he did not disagree with their intentions, but could not accept their inability to realize them.

Mrs. Frisch had formed opinions of the school through direct observation as a result of volunteer work every Tuesday in the school library. She commented, "People might have thought I was a spy," and continued:

> You could see the difference between the BB cluster's class and NBC. Mr. Beretta was there doing things with the kids -- he was very active. I couldn't figure out what Bert's team was doing. Parents said there were racial problems there between the orientals and whites. I would get depressed every Tuesday after working in the library. I couldn't see the kindergarten or the 1-2 because they are blocked off.

For Dr. and Mrs. Frisch, transferring their child from the Lincoln Acres school resulted in the enmity of several neighbors. One neighbor, once a good friend, insinuated that the Frisch's child wasn't "cutting it" in the school and that was why they transferred him. Other parents verbally assaulted Frisch for his action. As we have already mentioned, the decision was an extremely difficult one. Indeed, after recounting the agonies of another family that finally made the same decision, Mrs. Frisch said:

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> The real gut stuff never came out -- the real sob stories. There were so many little things going on. I don't think Mr. Brown understands what it means for a parent to take a child out of a neighborhood school. I liked him riding his bike. I like neighborhood schools. The community I went to school in had one. It's a very difficult decision. Mr. Brown could never understand.

2. Parents requesting transfer: an overview

In a questionnaire sent in February, 1976 to all parents of Lincoln Acres school students who were enrolled in September, 1975 we asked the following question:

> Since the beginning of school this fall have you done any of the following things with any of your children who attend Lincoln Acres school? (Check all that apply)

The response categories (below) are preceded by the percentage of parents indicating that they had considered one of the alternatives.

6%	Transferred to Fernwood school or another Washingtonville public school.
0%	Transferred to another school (private or parochial).
4%	Transferred from one classroom to another within Lincoln Acres school.
27%	Considered transferring your child but didn't.56)

From these data it is evident that dissatisfaction with the school was high; over one third of the parents answering the survey considered transferring their children and ten percent actually did.

Detailed reasons. Along with the question above, parents were asked "What were your major reasons for acting as you did?" Below are the answers that parents provided.

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56) The figure for "considered transferring" is probably inflated somewhat, since the question was retrospective. It should be noted that transfers began on November 24, and continued through approximately December 15. The data on transfers are presented here mainly for convenience; not all of these transfers and considerations of transfers took place this week.

These responses are from all parents who transferred their child to another school. First, transfers from NBC:

> After six weeks of trying to give the school a chance to organize, we could not continue due to no reading program, most assignments being oral with no written work, no math program (supplements on dittos being given). Lack of responsibility on the child's part towards his work, freedom to roam, play, etc. at will, three teaching periods a day, one of which was free play, and three discussion groups per day encouraging not communicating with parents if inclined to do so, expressing one's feelings at will.
>
> After much soul-searching we transferred one of our children out of LA. After many weeks we could find no reading or math programs. There was utter confusion -- with my child feeling no sense of accomplishment. The class was run in a haphazard manner, no follow-up on assigned work, misplaced homework assignments, incorrect or incomplete grading of papers. There was no person to whom my child felt responsible.
>
> We felt the teachers were not experienced, and the class was geared to 2nd grade. Our daughter in 3rd grade was learning nothing or reviewing. Everything was a game. She loved school but learned almost nothing. Her teacher at Fernwood said she was about 8 weeks behind. She transferred in early December.
>
> There was no curriculum. Teachers didn't know how to teach. My daughter was put in 2 reading books above her level and below her level in math. In my opinion my daughter seemed to be regressing in her learning skills. Student teachers taught her 90% of the time and they seemed more competent than the teachers. My daughter was not learning. She was just getting confused.

Transfers from BJW:

> Child said he wasn't learning anything. Apparent lack of curriculum and lack of basic skill programs. Not enough teacher instruction and direction. Principal stated verbally he was not aware of daily classroom activity. Request to transfer from one class to another within the school was denied on 3 or 4 occasions.
>
> I felt that my child was not getting the proper education that a child would normally be getting at his age. There were a lot of problems in the 4-5-6 groups and I felt that

> the 3 teachers involved were not doing the kind of teaching that should be taught. There was no spelling, penmanship, social studies and many things that should be taught to a nine year old.

Transferred from NBC and BJW:

> Two children were not responding to their potential as they had done in Fernwood school. They were losing interest because of constant testing during first six to eight weeks of school. No review of prior learned skills was given at beginning of school. We felt teacher instruction was negligible and there was no follow-up of teacher direction with the little instruction given. These two children began to show signs of boredom and irritation. They were transferred back to Fernwood. The third child (grade 1-2 level) is still attending LA school because we feel he has an excellent, experienced teacher.

The following are the responses of all parents who transferred their child to another classroom within Lincoln Acres. First transfers from BJW:

> Disgust with BJW, E. Brown. BJW individually fair to good, teaching equals 2-3 inexperienced but learning. Brown disappointment, no follow through. Very poor manager.
>
> Plans had been made to place child in Fernwood, but principal at LA school asked us to consider other 4,5,6 class (BB group). New class observed and decision made to keep child at LA school. Personal observation of BJW group revealed to me what I had suspected after 3 weeks of school. There were absolutely no records kept of any kind by these three teachers the 1st nine weeks. All teachers were supposed to complete profile sheets on each of their students during 9 wk period. These teachers had no records of the progress made on any of their students. No papers were sent home of any work being done at school in any of the basic skills. Parents were told by these teachers at a special meeting after 6 wks of school that all papers were being saved for conference time. At conference time no papers were available in the students' folders. There was absolutely no teaching of spelling in this group and no language arts and a pitiful reading program. 1) no basics taught; 2) attitude of 3 teachers; 3) total program poor; actions of teachers incompetent.
>
> We had no confidence in BJW to get down to teaching basics in an orderly fashion within a reasonable time.

Finally, below is a sample of responses from parents who considered transferring their child but didn't. These are not arranged by team because many of these families had multiple children, which made it impossible to know which team was being referred to. It should be noted that transfers were considered even from the kindergarten.

> There should be a standard for each grade which every student should try to meet instead of different levels (two or three) for different students even in the same grade.
>
> I felt my daughter in the 2-3 class was not getting the proper instruction and was not learning her school work. I decided not to transfer her because that would not solve my problem as I had other children coming into that class within the next few years. The class has now straightened itself out and I am much happier with it.
>
> My son must learn to make the best of most situations in life and deal with the problems those situations represent, so I decided to give him the opportunity now.
>
> Considering LA school is new, I will give them a chance.
>
> My nine-year old has a problem in that he does not like school and does no work. I felt Fernwood got more out of him.
>
> Basic subjects were not part of the daily school program such as reading, writing, math.
>
> The reason for this is because of the many complaints I and my wife have toward the open court classroom at LA. I don't like the idea of the open court classroom; I can't see any significance in its structure, or how one can be motivated educationally with constant distractions (especially on the kindergarten level).
>
> I did not feel the child was working up to his potential and I don't think the teachers know my child and his capabilities. I feel there was a lack of discipline, instruction, and follow-up on child's school work. My child didn't seem to know what was expected of him nor did there seem to be any clear cut curriculum, or goals for him.
>
> Dissatisfaction with her progress and the fact that she dislikes the school intensely.
>
> I don't act hastily. I prefer to keep things simple and keep the children in their local school; I feel things would get better at LA.

> I am not happy with his progress in this class. I am now considering requesting a transfer although other parents have told me their requests have been denied.

It seems clear from the responses that the complaints of parents who carried out transfer requests emphasized teacher incompetence (disorganization, lack of record-keeping, inexperience) as much as or more than they did programmatic inadequacies (lack of particular subjects, misplacement of students). As might be expected, those who considered a transfer but did not carry it out had less biting criticisms, contented themselves with more general complaints (open space, general claims of student non-learning, individualization) and were willing to give the school a chance to improve; a few even entertained the possibility that the child was to blame.

K. The Thirteenth Week of School

The number thirteen has well-known mystical properties in our culture: it means bad luck. At Lincoln Acres school, although things had certainly been turbulent before this week -- and luck could not be wholly blamed -- by the end of the week the heavy weight of the number thirteen had fallen directly on the entire school.

At the weekly Board of Education meeting, Mary Hertz summarized many parents' frustrated feelings about the school:

> Will it take another 13 weeks now that you've started a crash program in spelling, grammar and reading? Why did you let 13 weeks go by before you began to realize the problem? Why does it take 13 weeks for experienced teachers to recognize a problem? Where was the supervision? Recognition of problems was precipitated by a meeting with the parents. Must I go up to the school every two weeks -- as I have been doing -- to get any action?

1. Administrative intervention

Dr. Biddle, reacting to parent complaints, assigned Harriet Stein, a learning consultant in the district, and Astrid Little, his assistant, to begin work with the NBC team on Monday, December 1, 1975. Their purpose was to aid in strengthening the educational program. At the same time, Sam Pennington, the school's resource teacher, was assigned to help resolve problems in the BJW team. Additionally, Dr. Robert Marowitz, a state university reading specialist, who had been observing educational programs in the school for the previous two weeks, was now assigned to report on these two teams' programs.

2. The December 1 Board of Education meeting

Aside from routine approval of minutes from the last meeting, the only issue on the agenda of this regular meeting of the Board of Education was the Lincoln Acres school. Pressure from parents, as we have seen above, had initiated this formal discussion of problems in the school.

Biddle's report. At the beginning of the meeting, the 60 Lincoln Acres residents present (there were also about 30 people from other parts of the township) and one teacher from the Lincoln Acres school,57) heard Biddle give a summary of his evaluation of the school, based on recent visits. He noted that one of the problems in the BJW team had been that there was no spelling program, but that now there was "a very good one." In Biddle's assessment there were also problems in reading and math instruction in this team. He then announced that he had assigned Stein and Little to work in the school. He also said that Ellis Brown had asked Sam Pennington to work with the BJW group, and that a preliminary report had already been made by Dr. Marowitz. He then commented:

> One of the things they will be doing is help tighten up. I was in there today and saw some good changes but not everything is changed. There is a communications problem with many parents and teachers. I sometimes feel that they want the same things. I'm also very much aware that the morale of the teachers is not the greatest at this point. They are feeling pressured and [are] having a difficult time with what they have set out to do. They are feeling that lack of communication.
>
> By the end of this week there should be a schedule of the 4,5,6 (BJW) and a rather marked shift in the way kids see things. There are good things in the school. We called in Bob Marowitz from the State University. We haven't gotten his entire report but Mr. Brown and I have talked to him today and his assessment was that the kids are learning.

Parents' reactions. Following this brief assessment -- Biddle did not mention the NBC team except to say that Stein and Little would work with them -- Irena Farrell, the president of the Board of Education, opened the meeting for public questions. Needless to say, the parents' questions were critical, and their statements did not praise the school. Generally, they focused on what parents perceived to be a prolonged period of testing, absence of curriculum in certain areas, poor monitoring of student progress and failure to take corrective measures. Here are some of the exchanges during this portion of the meeting.

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57) Lindy Braun, the part-time art teacher, was the only faculty member present beside Ellis.

Sam Schwartz: Testing, testing. Every time we raised a question on the kids' education we were told they were being tested. Are you now going to start testing again? If we go under the assumption that the kids haven't been learning and we're now going to try to make it up I think it's more like half a year lost than 13 weeks. Are we looking at a lost year here? I'd like Dr. Biddle to respond to that.

Biddle: I'm not willing to say that no learning has been going on. The idea was to bring in some diagnostic instruments to get some benchmark data on these kids. I'm not responding to your statement because I don't agree. I don't think either that now we should have some way to be able to say to you, "Here's where your youngster stands and what we're going to do -- by January 15 this is where we expect him to be." In the event that we did not measure up, a number of things could be wrong: the background data or the prescription. We're not at that point, but we're working toward it.

Sam Schwartz: We were told that the kids in the 4,5,6 were being tested. No magic happened.

Biddle: There is no magic.

Sam Schwartz: I know there isn't. Now you're saying we're going to start again with testing.

Frisch: That's what you said.

Biddle: I'm sorry. There was testing but not as detailed as I'd like to see. There is all kinds of data available: observation, testing, kids' products. I'm not saying begin again but let's form significant benchmark data that everyone can agree on. I'm talking about a set of information on all kids.

A fairly detailed discussion of types of tests and their uses followed. Beside Ellis and Biddle, several Board members, including Charles Frisch, contributed to the debate. When it was over there was still tension between the idea of testing to monitor student progress and excessive testing that supplanted instruction.

One father wanted to know what would happen when the three interns working with NBC left in December. Biddle, admitting that he didn't know, turned the question over to Ellis, who said they were additional personnel, not a planned part of the program, and would not be missed. The questioner responded: "The teachers themselves say that they are an important part of the classroom." Biddle then asked Astrid Little if more interns would be coming from the college. Little's answer was that they would not be, until the following fall. The meeting continued with Sy Golden's questions.

> Golden: I'm the president of the Lincoln Acres PTA and Board of Education attorney. I want to ask a hard question of Bob and Ellis. For the 4,5,6 what day will there be a full reading and language program? Why has there been an interminable delay with these programs and spelling that began last week? Lastly, who bears responsibility? I don't mean to push anyone to the wall. I understand there could be problems beyond personnel. If we can't get an answer tonight I think we should get one soon.
>
> Biddle: Ellis, what can you say about it?
>
> Ellis: We had a specialist in today who said that the program was good. The teachers feel bad about the delay in starting the programs. There is no shirking of responsibility.
>
> Farrell: Did you get an answer?
>
> Golden: I didn't hear when the program starts. Are you saying we already have the tests?
>
> Ellis: Yes. We don't need more tests immediately. We hope we have some external acceptable measurements to show the community and Board.
>
> Farrell: Do you feel it was answered?
>
> Golden: Not about the delay.
>
> Biddle: I met with Ellis, Sam and some teachers last week and they expressed these concerns. They felt that the priorities that they had established were the ones they had to work on first. There were quite a lot of youngsters who were together for the first time this year. They spent a good deal of time doing two things. First, on a cohesive unit and second, getting motivated into learning processes. We can question their priorities but this is what they chose and did quite well. They gave examples of things kids could now do, for example, listening.
>
> Golden: The only thing I'm concerned about is that SRA and silent reading is not a reading program. Having one child ask another is not a reading program. That's what I hear from the ground floor, from my daughter.

> Ellis: A lot of what you heard was not from today. That's when these things started.[58]
>
> The audience collectively gasped: Today!!
>
> Goldman: Dr. Biddle referred to a communication gap. I think there is one bigger -- between teachers and administrators and other schools. There are no complaints with the 1-2 (applause). Some people with kids in both are only complaining about the 4,5,6. Parents are taking kids to Fernwood -- they must be doing something parents like.
>
> Marie Bonomi: I'd like to answer Rob Goldman's question. The 1-2 teachers have taken 25 children to themselves -- it is barricaded -- it might as well be an individual classroom. The 4,5,6 [pod] in which it is working [Alan and Jeanne] is highly structured and barricaded, and has 50 kids. If you look at the two pods that are working, they are nearly self-contained.

In this meeting, criticism of the kindergarten program was voiced for the first time in public since the school opened. Barbara Berger asked if there were educational objectives for the kindergarten, and continued:

> I feel there is a lack of substance and discipline -- self directed and teacher directed. I feel that many of the children have regressed after two years of nursery school. There is no time for follow-up, and they learn incorrect things. I think this is the story of the school.

Two other parents, both Berger's friends, also criticized the kindergarten program.

During the course of the meeting, Sam Schwartz and Mike Perciatelli said that it was no longer a question of whether or not they would take their children out of the school but only a matter of when they would transfer them. Several parents asked if the Board had the power to fire administrators and teachers. When the Board claimed that they did not, parents persisted in recommending that such steps be taken. The discussion then turned to how problems in the school should be handled.

> Biddle: This is not a criticism but a procedural comment. One of the problems is that a school can't deal with

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58) Several new programs had begun that morning in BJW, including spelling and more structured reading.

> problems when they don't know what the problems are. They [parents] often go right to the Board. People often don't want to talk to school people because they think it will be taken out on their kid. The lines of communication we have to have is to talk first to the people who are directly involved.
>
> Farrell: It was my impression that parents had gone to teachers first.
>
> Frisch: I think you're giving the wrong impression. I think some stayed away to give it a chance. Many have talked to teachers. When the 2-3 problem came up it was settled. Now we have the same problem in the 4,5,6. Who takes responsibility? I can't answer that.
>
> Peabody: Three of us have kids in Lincoln Acres. We have talked to you and many others have talked to teachers.
>
> Frisch: Are you implying that before this there were no problems?
>
> Biddle: No. All I mean is that problems are usually solved better at the operational level.

Action steps. The final part of the meeting concerned actions to be taken to correct the situation in the school. Golden wanted to know if there would be reports from Marowitz, Little and Stein. Farrell answered that the Board would receive a report, but not the public. Golden then requested a meeting to check that progress was being made. Ellis replied that in a short time, notices would be sent to parents to arrange meetings with teachers. Finally, Frisch asked if a report to the Board in January on the status of the BJW team was acceptable; by consensus the Board agreed to require a report on the state of the school in January. With this action, the tumultuous meeting ended.

3. A note on who was protesting

That week the front-page headline of the Washingtonville Courier read: "Acreites blast policy, teaching at school." In recounting the events of the Board meeting, the paper noted correctly:

> Many of the parents who protested at Monday's meeting were among the moderates in the Lincoln Acres community. This summer they had wanted to give openness a try.

Golden, Frisch, Berger, and Schwartz, among others, had been involved in the pre-opening stages of the school, and had at that time supported open education. Even after they transferred their children, Frisch, Golden and Schwartz regretted that the open space aspects of the school had not worked.

It is important to note that though the summer opponents had in effect been arguing against a phantom -- an unopened school -- the present "converted" opponents had had the opportunity to see the school in actual operation, and to compare their observations with what the teachers claimed to be doing. All the active opponents at this time had attended the open houses and the parent conferences, and had spoken several times with either the teachers or Brown.

Other parents -- for example, Mrs. Bonomi and Rob Goldman -- had opposed aspects of the school from the beginning and continued to, even though Goldman had been successful in getting a major concession before the school opened -- the reorganization of the primary groups.

Another important change had occurred by now: those who had initially opposed the school because it violated the bond issue no longer argued from that perspective. Indeed, many of these people (for example, Barbara Collins and Alex Georgiades) were fairly well satisfied with the school.

Supporters of the school -- it seems reasonable to assume that more than a few parents approved of the education their children were receiving[59)]-- did not come to the teachers' aid at this meeting. It is likely that community norms, the rapidity of the charges against the school, and perhaps the supporters' unwillingness to get involved, contributed to their silence.

In sum, opposition to the school was now led by a different group than in the summer, and was based on direct observation of classes and contact with the teachers and administration. Additionally, the most vocal dissenters -- Frisch, Golden, Berger and Schwartz -- were all prominent members of the community and relative "insiders" in the educational system of Washingtonville. Frisch, besides being a reading expert, was also a member of the Board of Education; Golden was the Board attorney; Berger was the chairperson of the LAHA education committee; Schwartz had formerly held that position. These statuses provided credibility to the criticisms; the protesters were no longer a fringe group arguing about a somewhat remote event such as the bond issue, or an as yet unopened school.

These shifts in the protesting group intensified the conflict and increased the pressure on the school to change.

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59) At later meetings, numerous parents did demonstrate support for the school as it was originally planned and operated through December. Survey data collected in February also lend weight to the idea that more supporters existed than was evident from public behavior.

4. The PTA Executive Committee begins work

On Wednesday evening the Executive Committee of the Lincoln Acres PTA held its first meeting, to form subcommittees and discuss fund-raising techniques. Sy Golden, the recently-elected PTA president, did not notify Ellis of the meeting. Ellis' reaction was:

> Shit. Golden started the PTA without me. I'll have to get on the phone and chew him out. According to the by-laws I'm a member of the executive committee. It makes common sense to tell the principal about a meeting.

It is not clear if Golden's act was intentional or merely an omission. It does seem unusual, however, that so central a person in a PTA as the principal could be overlooked, especially when the first meeting of the new organization was being planned.

5. The reorganization of BJW

Glenda, Bert and Rebecca, who had been the target of much of the recent parent criticism, began working with Sam Pennington on Monday, December 1, 1975. Sam's aim was to give the BJW program "more structure and make it more visible." Basically, he worked to help them organize more effectively; by late in the week they had produced a schedule of their daily activities and an outline of a curriculum. On Friday, December 5, with a cover letter signed by Ellis, a five-page report on the status of the reorganized BJW team was sent to every parent of students in the class. The report contained the weekly schedule (including activities of each day) and a description of the curriculum in reading, math, language, science and social science. The cover letter, written by Ellis, explained the program and invited parents to make an appointment if they wanted to discuss anything, but asked parents "not to come to the school to talk to the teachers during the school day (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.), since this kind of conference takes the teachers away from their students." The letter also explained the origin of the new program.

> A great deal of the instruction outlined in this report has been started recently. I would like to explain how these new additions came into being. As a group of students proceed through the year, they make progress that requires some change in schedule and program; in a new school the adjustment period for some youngsters can be rather long and require rather large scale programming when it is over. As teachers proceed through the year they perceive better ways of delivering services to their students; again, these better ways can be more numerous and significant in a new school. A most important source of the changes, however, is parent input. I hope you will find whatever concerns you have been kind enough to mention to the teachers or to me responded to in this report.

Along with the report, all BJW students took packets of homework assignments home for the weekend. These were to be signed by parents and returned to the school on Monday by the students.

Team teaching was not affected by any of the recent changes in the instructional program.

After working with the BJW team for a week, Sam's evaluation, expressed to the researcher was:

> I have confidence in BJW. They have more experience than NBC. These teachers were all in the system before. The Board, however, has to develop policies that are clear and that are the same for all schools in the district. For example, we can't test unless they give us the tests.
>
> What I have done in BJW is to work on cleaning up their administrative procedures. Now they don't have to spend time on scheduling during the day but can meet and plan for children.

The teachers in the BJW team were not happy with the course of events. But for the most part, they did not express their displeasure to Sam or Ellis at the time. As we shall see in detail later, they objected to Sam's intervention, and to the way Ellis had managed the reorganization. Their delayed criticism also focused on parents' role in determining the educational program: essentially, they felt the parents had interfered with what they were attempting.

6. The non-reorganized teams

During the reorganization of the BJW team and the NBC team (which we will describe shortly) the other teams in the school continued to change as a result of internal and external events. By the end of the week, most teachers had read the Washingtonville Courier account of the December 1 Board of Education meeting. They thought several statements attributed to Ellis in the article were non-supportive of the school; teacher morale dropped even further.

The kindergarten team. As a result of the criticism by Barbara Berger and her friends at the Board meeting, the administration asked the kindergarten team to hold an open house for parents. All the kindergarten teachers, Alice, Sarah and Louise, thought the open house was unnecessary, and that it was unwise to respond in such a way to the complaints of three parents. Indeed, to Louise it seemed particularly unnecessary, since all three of the complaining parents had children in Sarah's class; the entire kindergarten program was not being questioned, only a particular segment of it. Louise and the others thought that the parents' actions were unfair on another basis; they had approached the Board of Education before talking with the teachers about the problems.

The MTK team. No changes in the structure of teaching had occurred in the MTK team during the past weeks. During the week of reorganization of the two teams, however, Dori's attitude toward Priscilla had begun to change. She now admired Priscilla because "she knows how to handle herself." And since the meeting when Ellis told Priscilla she was "unfit to teach," there had been no further interpersonal problems in the team. As for Priscilla, she viewed the current situation in the school as being "out-of-whack." Her attitude now was that she was going to put a "minimal effort" into school because, "there are other things in my life -- I want to learn French."

The BB cluster. A similar situation existed here. Jeanne was tense in school, wondered who was actually running it (she thought that Monica, the secretary, managed things most of the time) and felt that morale throughout the school was "down." In terms of activities in the classroom, Jeanne said she and the other BB teacher were, for all practical purposes, working in separate, self-contained classrooms. In some areas, however, they continued to switch students, but they planned instructional activities separately.

Another example of the tension Jeanne felt was that Bert would often visit her and make semi-joking comments such as, "you're the team that's doing well, how do you do it?" She wished for better communication with other teams. For example, noise from NBC bothered her, but she felt unable to talk with them about the problem because they had enough troubles already. Her solution to these problems was similar to Priscilla's: she decided to "wear blinders" when in school, avoiding attention to the activities of others around her.

7. The reorganization of NBC

Astrid Little and Harriet Stein began working with the teachers and interns in the NBC team on Monday, as had been announced by Biddle. Astrid and Harriet assessed the placement of children in reading programs, discussed reading techniques with the teachers, and re-examined the purposes of the way the current instructional program was arranged. By Wednesday, with consultation from Harriet and Astrid -- particularly Astrid -- the teachers had reached an important decision: their program would be strengthened if they abandoned team teaching, and formed three self-contained classrooms. The new program was scheduled to begin on the following Monday, December 8, 1975.

Sally claimed that she and her teammates were looking forward to the change, mainly because all three of them had been feeling "overwhelmed," and that the move to self-contained classrooms would relieve this pressure. In her opinion the problem was that they had "bitten off too much." She felt, however, that the problems were aggravated by the removal that week of additional pupils from NBC to Fernwood school; on Tuesday Perciatelli and others removed their children. Sylvia Peabody, a Board of Education member, threatened to remove her son, but decided not to because of difficulties with transporting him to another school.[60a] It was Sally's view that Frisch's transfer of his child the week before had begun the current trend.

Despite her claim that she and her team members were looking forward to the change, Sally spent time on Wednesday sobbing in Ellis' office. Ellis told her that he understood her feelings but he couldn't give her constant support; she should develop enough internal strength to be able to deal with criticism. Sally said that she accepted this response and retained respect for Ellis. It had helped her understand Ellis' attitude when she saw the quotations from Monday's Board meeting he had posted on the bulletin board -- including the parent comments that asked when his contract ended.

Jane and Katie, the other members of the NBC team, were unusually quiet and appeared to be depressed. Two weeks later, Jane, who had never had her abilities questioned, said, "My program was fine. It was the other two that didn't work. I wish they had done better."

Biddle monitored the situation through conversations with Astrid Little during the week. He appreciated the job that his assistant was doing with NBC, and on at least one occasion, gave her a hug. At mid-week Biddle visited the school and talked with the teachers in the NBC team. He left them somewhat puzzled: he told them that he supported them, but thought that they didn't know what they were doing.

On Thursday afternoon the team met with Harriet and Astrid to work on plans for creating self-contained classrooms. To aid the redesign they intended to model themselves after MTK, and borrow ideas from Alan and Jeanne. That afternoon they also wrote a letter to parents to explain the new educational program; the teachers felt that this message was urgent because it might prevent more transfers.

Ellis moves to fire Katie. On Friday afternoon Ellis asked Katie Neustadt either to resign or be fired, and requested that she not inform others of this action until Monday. His reason for this action was:

> She is incompetent. She was responsible for the NBC reading program and had misplaced kids in reading levels by as much as a year-and-a-half. That's not so bad in the higher grades but it's disastrous in the lower ones. We found kids reading in second grade books who should have been in fourth grade ones.

60a) David Hauptmann, the principal of Fernwood school, had a child in the NBC team, but never complained about the education she was receiving, at least not publicly.

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NBC reorganization planning continues. To prepare for the transition to self-contained classrooms to begin on Monday, December 8, Astrid Little called a meeting of the NBC team and interns for Sunday, December 7, 1975. She also invited Ellis to the meeting, which was to be held at her home. At first Ellis resisted, but after Little insisted, he came.

The all-day meeting was primarily a training session in how to teach reading. Also, because of the need for additional placement testing, it was decided to postpone the change to self-contained classrooms until later in the week. During the day Ellis said practically nothing. Katie, who Little felt had been antagonistic toward her during the previous week, was now, in Little's phrase, "suddenly sweet and pleasant."[60b]

Overall, Little was appalled by the lack of information that teachers had on student progress, and by the absence of data on teacher performance -- a responsibility of Ellis'. At this time, Astrid viewed Ellis as having abdicated. Indeed, Levinsky said to the researcher that, in effect, the faculty felt Astrid was the principal.

It should be recalled that Astrid Little had been a candidate for the principalship of Lincoln Acres school and was disappointed when she did not get the job. Now, with Biddle's support, she found herself reorganizing the most embattled part of the school, and thought that the principal had stepped aside. It is possible that she viewed herself as the person actually running the school.* But from the teachers' standpoint, it is probably more accurate to say that they felt no one was running the school. To them, it was "out-of-whack" as Priscilla put it, or run by the secretary, as Jeanne thought. The dominant feeling on the part of teachers was clearly that the school was drifting rather than being controlled.

Katie decides to contest her firing. Despite Ellis' request that Katie not notify other faculty members of her dismissal until Monday, she did contact several teachers over the weekend. After talking with the president of the Washingtonville Education Association (WEA) and an official of the county teachers' association, she telephoned Bert White and Dori Kraus. On the advice of the Association she asked Bert and Dori for advice, and whether either of them would be willing to attend a meeting with Biddle and Ellis as her representatives from WEA -- since the teacher contract stipulated that in such circumstances a WEA member can act as a third party to ensure due process. Katie selected Bert and Dori because she had previously discussed various problems in her team with

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60b) At the time of this meeting, Little and the teachers present were unaware that Katie had been fired.

* After reading the study, Biddle disagreed with this supposition, and said that Little's participation had been agreed to by Brown, as had been Stein's help for the teachers.

Dori. In addition, both teachers were tenured and therefore less vulnerable than others on the faculty. Dori agreed to represent Katie.

After the Sunday meeting at Astrid Little's house, Katie telephoned Jane and Sally, her teammates, to inform them of the events that had taken place since Friday.

L. The Fourteenth Week of School

On Monday morning, December 8, 1975, the president of the Washingtonville Education Association and an officer of the county teachers' association visited the school. They discussed the situation with Ellis, informed him that Katie had decided to contest her dismissal, and suggested that a meeting be held to discuss the matter further. A meeting with Biddle, Little, Brown, Katie and Dori was arranged for 3:00 p.m. that day.

The faculty was shocked by the recent events. Sally and Jane were especially depressed; they were afraid they would be the next to be fired. As it turned out, during the day Ellis reassured them and others that their jobs were not in danger. Sally said she looked forward to self-contained classrooms even more than before, and concluded, "I wouldn't even experiment next year unless I was sure I had full support from the parents."

1. The faculty discusses Katie's firing

On Monday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. the teachers assembled in the MTK area, without Ellis or Katie, to discuss Katie's firing.

Somewhat bewildered and unorganized, the meeting jumped from topic to topic. The sequence of events that week -- the hostile Board meeting followed by the newspaper account of it -- suggested to the teachers that Katie's firing was not coincidental but had been caused by these events. There were strong suspicions that Katie was being used by the administration as a scapegoat.

Bert talked about the need to insure that correct procedures were followed to protect Katie, and suggested that another faculty member be with her at all times to insure this. The teachers then elected Dori WEA representative so she could represent Katie. Regina, who was non-tenured, was elected to be the other WEA representative.

Jeanne expressed her sympathy for the non-tenured teachers in an emotional speech. She said: "I don't see how you can work in an atmosphere with this kind of pressure." Priscilla elaborated this view and commented that the teachers were "caught in the middle: the Board hasn't acted responsibly." The others nodded agreement with both statements.

Bert then made another speech in which he considered ways to approach the problem. He recommended that the faculty keep information concerning the firing within the school. But Wanda said that she had already heard that rumors about a teacher being fired in Lincoln Acres school were spreading throughout the district. Bert then suggested that they obtain more information -- for example, they didn't know exactly what Ellis had told Katie on Friday, or how much evidence had to be produced by the administration to show that a teacher was incompetent.

Someone asked if an appropriate action would be to write a letter to the editor of the Washingtonville Courier and the Board of Education. After discussion the teachers decided that it would be a self-defeating course of action to have the "battle fought in the Washingtonville Courier." "Beside " claimed Rebecca Barone, "the Washingtonville Courier editor cuts up letters and meeting notes and distorts them. The Board meeting I was at once came out distorted and sounding more angry than it was."

Sam said, "I have known Bob Biddle for a long time and I can't believe that he would use scapegoats." Most agreed with this assessment, but Priscilla noted that "Ellis tried to fire me. Maybe this is standard operating procedure with him."

This comment led Sally to say that it was not fair for only Katie to be fired, because she was part of a team. Prompted by this remark, other teachers asked Sally and Jane whether they had noticed any evidence that Katie had not performed her duties. Their answer was that she had done as much as they had -- possibly more -- and that they were stunned by what had happened. Others agreed, noting that they had seen Katie working in school late at night and on weekends.

The conversation then rambled: the Washingtonville Courier article was re-discussed; others noted the "lack of trust" between the faculty and Ellis; and there was further discussion of Katie's rights. Priscilla said that as she remembered it, Ellis made the decision during the summer workshop to have Katie teach the 2-3 class. Dori, she recalled, had wanted to teach the third grade, and Katie the first. But Ellis wanted Priscilla to remain a first-grade teacher and suggested that it would be bad to break up teams. She concluded, "The problem really isn't Katie's."

Comments were becoming sparse; the mood was sombre. Bert summarized by saying that they should get more information and that they should support Katie in every possible way. At this point Sam was notified over the intercom to report to the principal's office. When he returned a few minutes later he announced, "Ellis has asked that we give time to the researcher's questionnaire now."61)

2. The meeting Katie requested

At the same time the faculty was meeting, Bob Biddle, Ellis, Katie, Astrid Little and Dori Kraus met in Ellis' office to discuss Katie's dismissal. Dori attended the meeting as a representative of the WEA, and Astrid Little was present because her evaluation of Katie's teaching during the previous week had influenced, to some extent, Ellis' decision to fire Katie.

Near the beginning of the meeting, Biddle said he did not like Katie's having contacted the WEA. He said that when the WEA became involved in an issue the teachers never won. He also indicated that he didn't favor Dori's presence as a representative of the WEA.

Biddle then questioned Katie on a variety of teaching methods. The questions were difficult and involved substantive knowledge of subject areas, as well as of educational practice and methods. For example, Biddle asked questions about young children with perceptual handicaps, which was one of his favorite areas and thus one about which he knew a great deal. According to one knowledgeable observer, Katie answered the questions very competently.

When Biddle asked Ellis what Katie had done to deserve dismissal, Ellis produced a notebook, with a record of all the meetings he had had during the course of the year that involved Katie. He noted that in a

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61) Several weeks prior to this the researcher had made arrangements with Ellis to administer a general questionnaire assessing "the state of the school" during a faculty meeting. At that time the next faculty meeting without a scheduled activity was December 8, 1975; Ellis agreed that the questionnaire would be administered then. Needless to say, December 8 proved not to be a typical day. A quote from the researcher's field notes (written that night) comments on the problems encountered.

> I was having difficulty in this situation -- I wanted to give the questionnaire but felt it was a bad time. They didn't seem to be in the mood to take it -- they were at their lowest point and our questionnaire seemed relatively unimportant to the organization in this context. I felt like not giving it. On the other hand, I felt as though we put a lot of work into it, needed some information and I wasn't sure that the atmosphere would be improved in a week, anyway. As it turned out, Ellis made the decision for me.

meeting on October 7, 1975 it was decided that Katie would install certain practices and subject matter in the reading program. He said that these actions had not yet been carried out; he could claim no responsibility for this situation. Similarly, he went to his records and located instances when other decisions had been made, and who had the responsibility for implementing them.

At one point in the meeting, Ellis introduced the matter of Katie's having told other faculty members about the action he took against her on Friday. He pointed out that he had asked her to keep their conversation confidential. Katie claimed that she could not recall that part of the conversation, in part because she was disoriented during the meeting. She then apologized to Ellis for having told other faculty members. Not finding the apology acceptable, Ellis said that her action had turned the faculty against him, so that

> The hatred in here today was so thick you could cut it with a knife. I would rather have to suffer all year long with the kind of complaints I've received from the community than endure resentment from the staff.

During the meeting, Astrid and Dori said very little; the main actors were Biddle, Ellis and Katie. In fact, toward the end of the meeting Biddle acknowledged this; he asked Ellis if he still thought Katie should be fired. After a long silence, Ellis answered that he did. Participants in the meeting were then narrowed further when Biddle asked all to leave with the exception of Katie.

As the others waited outside the office, Biddle offered a compromise to Katie; he said that she could be a substitute teacher in the district. Katie accepted this offer immediately.

3. December 8, 1975 ends at Lincoln Acres school

For the next hour, the teachers diligently filled in responses to the research questionnaire. At 4:45, Katie -- visibly pleased -- walked into the room where most teachers, (several had already finished and left) were working. She told Wanda and Sam the outcome of her meeting with Biddle, as other teachers continued with the questionnaire. Approximately ten minutes later Ellis entered the room, took a questionnaire, sat down next to Lee, and began to answer the questions. He joked with Lee, and seemed highly animated. No teacher acknowledged his presence. Shortly afterward, he joked that "This [the questionnaire] is for the football game tonight," and left. The remaining teachers finished the questionnaire, then talked briefly with Katie and left.

For Lincoln Acres school, the most turbulent day in its short history was over.

4. The kindergarten open house

The day following all of this activity was relatively quiet. That evening, as requested by several parents, the kindergarten held an open house. Seventy-five parents attended. As in other open houses, they had the opportunity to inspect the teaching area and ask questions of teachers. The overwhelming majority of parents said they were pleased with the kindergarten program; many told the teachers they were unable to comprehend what some parents were complaining about. Understandably, the teachers were pleased and relieved to hear positive comments from parents.

5. Biddle's and Brown's assessments of the situation

By Thursday, Biddle had reflected on recent events involving the Lincoln Acres school and concluded that "the heat is almost out of it now." It was his opinion that the school was "on an upswing," since two weeks ago it had "hit bottom." He also commented that "stirring up the pot" was undesirable, and said cryptically that reporters had been doing interviews that he wished they wouldn't.

Ellis also viewed things as having improved in the school, but not as much as Biddle thought. He said that things were "very messy -- it's not clear what's going on." He added that he didn't know "whether the blood-letting was aimed at Bob's head or mine. I think that the teacher dismissal might cool off things,or arouse the blood lust even more."

In terms of his own situation, discussions concerning the following year's budget were beginning, and the district was looking for ways to reduce it by a million dollars. One of the possibilities was closing one of the rural elementary schools. If this was done, Ellis, as the junior administrator in the district, would be out of a job -- at least out of a job in administration. He had discussed his future in the Washingtonville educational system with Biddle the day before, and said that they had "settled the issue." In Ellis' view, Biddle "understood that I'd like to stay here and that I'm not going to preside over my own funeral. He accepted that. I feel that he understands and accepts what I'm doing, and there are no absolute implications, one way or the other." He added that he thought Biddle was supportive of him and that "I don't feel like letting go of something that I took a year and a half to plan."

6. Ellis goes public

Biddle's comment about an interview that he would rather not have seen printed apparently referred to an interview Ellis had granted to the Washingtonville Courier. Later that day the boldest headline on the front page read: "Brown: 'limits on being bull's eye in target.'"

The article begins with a summary of the history of the school, from its planning stages through the most recent controversy. Following this, there is an extensive interview with Brown, who is identified by the newspaper as being "at the center of the controversy." Before beginning the interview, the reporter wrote:

> Some parents say Mr. Brown is arrogant and unresponsive to their children's needs. More moderate observers say he lacks the administrative know-how to monitor teaching methods in the open school and correct teaching problems. His supporters praise him for his hard work, his disciplinary action against unruly students and his efforts to correct teaching problems he has perceived.

Since this interview is Brown's response to his critics, an illumination of his state of mind, an assessment of the year thus far and a plan for the future, it is reproduced here in its entirety. The questioner was Linda Shaughnessy, the managing editor of the Washingtonville Courier.

> Q: Please specify the exact problems teachers in grades four through six and grades two through three are having.
>
> Mr. Brown: The two involve two different kinds of problems. Teachers of the grades four through six pod [BJW] knew from the outset what was best for the students, what parents wanted and what programs were needed. They were going about achieving all these things gradually. But their values were not congruent with those of the parents. The children in their classes came from several local elementary classrooms, from a wide range of programs both structured and open, so teachers tried to clarify with kids what processes were going on and to give them a choice. They tried to trust the student to make some decisions about his or her program and to allow him or her to work independently and responsibly whenever possible.
>
> The teachers knew they needed a spelling program (one was started last week) and they knew they needed a beefed-up reading program but though they had started a formal reading program in September it was not strong enough. They waited until midyear to strengthen it.
>
> Q: What about the problems in the grade two-three group? [NBC]
>
> Mr. Brown: Teachers in that group began a program which was too ambitious. It was not a poor concept, nor was it poorly planned. Had it been, I would not have approved it. But teachers were trying to treat many needs of the student besides intellectual needs. They had a broad

view of what they wanted to do for each student and a strong sense of the weaknesses of many of the more conventional methods of teaching. They were developing alternative ways of teaching while trying to do too much. I perceived a problem and on October 7 met with the teachers. I told them their program needed more coherence and that what I saw of their program didn't meet the reading and language arts needs of the students.

The students were doing a lot of different kinds of language arts programs and learning to love school, but the program was weak in reading and vocabulary skills.

During the first part of October the teachers reorganized their program to put more emphasis on intellectual needs and basic skills. They reorganized their schedule, spending more time on these skills. They began using the workbooks and other conventional material. They reported to parents on this October 28 and October 30 at our open house. I've seen a great deal of progress in this group.

Q: At the December 1 school board meeting Superintendent Bob Biddle promised testing as a diagnostic instrument to show parents what level their children have attained. Have you started this diagnostic testing?

Mr. Brown: We started testing students in September and recently have been testing where it seems appropriate. We are trying to test so [as] not to interrupt the class schedule or to call off work to hold full-scale tests. The tests serve to validate groups of children and to change grouping of children if tests prove the grouping to be wrong. The kind of testing we are doing now -- criterion-referenced testing -- offers a statement of what a student can do. That is, it tests specific skills, i.e., if a student can locate Africa on the map of the world. It defines those things the child has mastered, has not mastered, and has mastered in part. It is prescriptive in the sense that it shows teachers what to work on with the student.

The kind of testing the layman is most familiar with is the norm-referenced tests which show the quantity of things a child knows and ranks him or her according to grade level. But this test doesn't tell anything about how a teacher should manage his or her student day to day. It can show a child is a fifth grade reader. But that same child might have an eighth grade vocabulary

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but be third grade level in comprehension. The teacher could discover these deficiencies with the criterion test.

Resource teachers, not the regular teachers, are doing the testing, and it is being done in grades four through six [BJW] where there are widespread concerns.

Q: Last week a parent said the other groups of classes which parents have not complained about are successful because they are more structured. Is this true?

Mr. Brown: These pods offer team teaching, though perhaps a different type of team teaching. But the basic difference between those pods parents have complained about and those they are happy with, is not a question of structure, but of priorities. In the two "successful" pods intellectual training dominates during the teaching day to a greater extent than in the 2-3 [NBC] and one of the 4,5,6 groups [BJW].

Q: You tread a tightrope between supporting your staff and being responsive to parents. Is there any middle ground between the two?

Mr. Brown: No. Parents express their concerns and some criticize me saying I listen but don't hear them. I talk to my staff but when I hear parents I also try to make parents understand why teachers are doing what they are doing. I take note of parents' complaints, many of which are valid, and I follow up on the complaints, but many involve personnel issues which I can't discuss with parents. They say they don't see anything happening after they complain. But often I can't come back to parents and discuss personnel problems. It isn't professional. What I can and have discussed with parents is program, materials use, placement of students. And we've held more public meetings in this school's first three months' operation than any other school I know about.

Q: Could this controversy happen in any town given the recent back-to-basics movement that is sweeping this nation?

Mr. Brown: There are lots of ways of opening a school than the way this one was opened. Many parents moved into this area long after the school's planning had begun. It was difficult to measure those newcomers' desires. If someone applied the same scrutiny to any school in this or any other district, they would come up with many gripes about the way the school is run.

Schools don't orient themselves toward accountability because they are not billing for their services or using their services as the basis for research. This school has spent more time on accountability than it might have done four or five years ago because of the recent push for school accountability. I sympathize with parents who came here after the school was developed and feel disenfranchised because either they weren't here when decisions about the school were being made or they did not know how to make themselves heard.

Q: You are only 27, a new principal in a new school with a new concept that has never been tried. Do you feel bitter about being thrust into controversy?

Mr. Brown: I feel I was brought here blindly. I arrived around January 1 and was told I had to choose a staff in 20 working days.* I worked from a list of volunteer transfer requests when I had anticipated being able to work first with transfers but to choose from outside the district too. All the teachers here taught elsewhere in Washingtonville. On the interviews I had with the lay committee choosing the Lincoln Acres school principal I was led to believe I was hired because they liked what I was doing in New Hampshire. I believed I was hired because of my school; otherwise why would four people drive 400 miles to see and compliment my school? I thought I would build a conservative model of what I had in New Hampshire here in Washingtonville. I was making commitments to teachers who wanted to teach in this situation. In 20 days upon my arrival here I had no chance to validate these assumptions with public opinion. Even among the district's professional staff members the opinion was circulated before I came here that Lincoln Acres would be an entirely open school. The hiring, architecture and choice of teachers was geared in that direction. Within the next few months public opinion showed that was the opposite of what many people wanted. Those who chose me knew where I was coming from when they brought me here.

But whatever bitterness I may feel about the confused pretenses upon which I was brought here, whatever anger parents may feel over their lack of input in the school architecture or program or hiring, here we are. We've got the kids. We've a school. What are we going to do with them? We must move forward. By midyear parents will know teachers better

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* Biddle's comment is, "Nonsense."

> and teachers will know parents better. Both will have a clearer understanding of what each wants. In my own and my staff's proposals on how to set up the school next year, there will be more alternatives in staffing, programs and use of the architecture. Parents want and deserve alternatives and they will get them.
>
> Right now I feel I'm 27 going on 81. I feel proud of the work I've done here. I feel I've taken and acted upon criticism well. I feel I've taken some criticism that might properly be directed elsewhere. I haven't evaded criticism. I've worked hard to resolve the problems. I think the kids here are generally pleased and the education we've provided here is excellent. I am a part of some things that should be continued and I want to see them continued.
>
> There are for me and for the entire staff human limits to how much longer we can continue being the bull's eye of a target. I'll only be 27 once. I have wondered if I want to spend the year like this. I could not indefinitely put in this much effort with this little satisfaction. But I feel we've been through the crunch or we are going through the crunch -- the school morale is low now -- but I'm sure the job satisfaction for all of us will be greater in the future.
>
> I would ask of parents that they be as quick to support us if they feel we are doing something well as some have been to criticize us. Some parents have voiced strong criticism and equally strong support. These parents are listened to because the staff knows they are not just here to attack.

(Comments.) For the most part, if the reader has followed the narrative to this point, the majority of Brown's answers will appear to be simply elaboration on previous events, or possibly viewed as a well-calculated public relations campaign. From the latter standpoint, it could be argued that Brown tried to placate the community critics, disassociate himself from various problems in the school and, in a sense, cast himself as having risen above the controversy, by stressing the need to get down now to serious work. Additionally, the interview has a quality of personal honesty; he admits to deficiencies and the feeling that he's "going on 81."

But beyond this, two themes Brown mentioned seem to be especially important. The first is that Brown felt he was appointed as principal for a type of school that the community did not in fact want. Secondly, he made the claim that he had taken some criticism that, "might properly be directed elsewhere" that is, toward Biddle and the Board of Education. Both of these themes were to be elaborated by Brown in the following weeks.

7. NBC becomes three classes

On Thursday, December 11, 1975 the NBC team switched from team teaching to three self-contained classrooms, as they had planned with Astrid Little the preceding week. The teaching area they had used as a team was now partitioned by furniture into three discrete classrooms (see Diagram VI).

Friday was to be Katie's last day in the school; her replacement would begin on Monday. A notice announcing the new teacher was placed on the bulletin board in the office. It read in part,

> Miss Katie Neustadt will be leaving Lincoln Acres school today.... Mrs. Jan Holden will be assuming Miss Neustadt's class Monday, December 15th.
>
> Mrs. Holden comes to Lincoln Acres with five years of full-time teaching experience. A mother of two children and resident of Allwood Green, Mrs. Holden has most recently distinguished herself as a substitute teacher, particularly in the open space classrooms of Oxford school.

This notice was also sent to the parents of Katie's former students. Additionally, an open house was planned for Wednesday, December 17, to introduce the new teacher and acquaint parents with the new educational program in the second and third grades.

For the teachers, Katie's departure was an emotional experience. At lunch several congregated in the NBC teaching space and commiserated with her. Lindy, the art teacher, seems to have expressed what the others felt: "It was too bad that Katie had to be a sacrificial lamb." Near tears, the teachers had difficulty finding things to say. Sarah circulated a card that wished Katie well, and all of the teachers signed it. Generally, the mood of the school was one of depression.

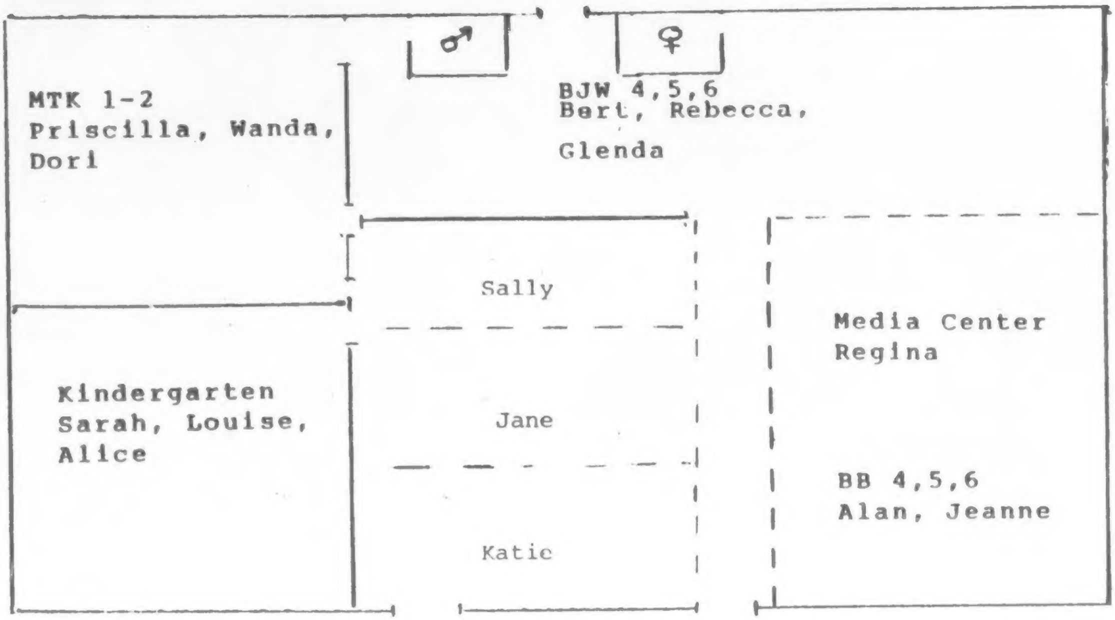
Many of the children in Katie's class were also deeply affected by her imminent departure. They cried, and questioned why she had to leave; several told Katie they were going to ask their parents to contact the principal to protest her leaving.

M. The Fifteenth Week of School

Jan Holden, the teacher who replaced Katie, began teaching in her own self-contained classroom on Monday. Priscilla Talbot, still complaining of problems with noise in her classroom and planning to teach in a self-contained classroom in Lincoln Acres the following year, took the day off from school to visit a Quaker school in a nearby city. Her intention was to "be reminded of what open education is and can be."

DIAGRAM VI

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL FLOOR ARRANGEMENT, DECEMBER 11, 1975


♂
♀
MTK 1-2
Priscilla, Wanda, Dori
BJW 4,5,6
Bert, Rebecca, Glenda
Sally
Media Center
Regina
Kindergarten
Sarah, Louise, Alice
Jane
BB 4,5,6
Alan, Jeanne
Katie

—— = Floor-to-ceiling partitions

----- = Shelving or furniture arranged to form a barrier

1. The faculty meeting

After school that Monday, the first faculty meeting in several weeks was held. Ellis put two topics on the agenda: formation of reorganization committees for the next year and open discussion. The teachers were quiet as Ellis explained that he wanted them to begin considering plans for next year, what committees they thought were necessary, and which ones they would like to be on. There was little teacher response to Ellis' comments; when it was time for "open discussion" nothing was said. According to Wanda, everyone walked out of the meeting saying, "We wish we had discussed Katie."

Compared with the previous week, the first days of this week were subdued: the main business of the school was education, not politics. Remaining from the previous week, however, was a widespread gloom among the faculty.

2. The open houses

As promised at the December 1, Board of Education meeting, the school made attempts to inform parents of changes in the instructional program. The first of these was an open house for the reorganized and reconstituted 2-3 grades on December 17, 1975. And on the following day the BJW team held an open house to inform parents of recent changes they had made.

The 2-3 open house. Fifty-five parents gathered in the media center along with the three teachers, Biddle, Brown, and Little. Among the parents were several of the persistent critics who had decided to leave their children in the class: Peabody, Schwartz, Johnson, and Bonomi.

Ellis welcomed the parents, introduced the teachers and described the new teaching arrangement, emphasizing that "we have a situation now of 25 students with an individual teacher." The teachers quickly described their daily schedule of classroom activities. In all cases it was highly structured: for instance, each class had three reading groups that met in the morning for a half-hour each with the teacher.

With the by now standard admonition that parents couldn't ask about individual students, Ellis opened the meeting for questions. Parent questions fell into five large areas: (1) methods of dividing the classes, (2) student profiles, (3) reading instruction, (4) testing, and (5) progress reports. Below are some of the exchanges between parents and educators.

> Mr. Johnson: Is this program being done now? Last time we heard a gre program that wasn't being carried out.
>
> Ellis: We have a third party here who can answer that. Astrid, is what has been described being done?
>
> Astrid Little: Yes. It began last Thursday.

At several points during the session, Ellis referred questions to Astrid Little in this manner. Astrid's answers were always short and appeared to be accepted by the parents. Astrid viewed herself as a central figure in this meeting; she expected to be asked to comment on the state of the school. A dilemma that she expressed in talking to Levinsky before the meeting concerned what she should say about Ellis; she didn't want to "throw him to the wolves." She resolved the conflict by giving minimal, informational and non-accusatory answers.

Following questions about the placement procedure for reading groups, Mr. Jones asked a series of questions about the use of testing in the school. He concluded by saying:

> Jones: The move you've made has been good. It's too bad it wasn't sooner. It has had an effect on the kids. They are upset with losing a teacher.
>
> Mrs. Manning: You can't complain now! They made the changes you want. This is getting ridiculous. Let's get on with education. [About one-third of the parents applauded this.]

Manning's comment marked the first time since the beginning of the conflict that a parent had publicly defended the school. As we shall see below, other parents began to feel that the changes made, especially in the 2-3 grades, were not positive. The meeting continued with further queries concerning the day-to-day operation of the school, and with complaints from several parents that they were not being informed about their child's progress. Toward the end of the meeting Sam Schwartz asked:

> Schwartz: Where do you see the 2-3 going?
>
> Ellis: It will be the same for a while.
>
> Schwartz: Where would you like to see it going?
>
> Ellis: I can't prophesize and say what's going to happen. We have to accommodate the students, teachers and parents. We have to find a way for finding the best way the kids can learn. I'm comfortable with what I see now and I think the teachers are. There are limitations that maybe we'll find out about.
>
> Schwartz: I think that there were good things about the 2-3.
>
> Ellis: Maybe in a year we'll go back.
>
> Manning: If it wasn't for the parents could the open space 2-3 have functioned as it did elsewhere? Could that 2-3 space be operating today if it wasn't for the parents' pressure?

> Ellis: You're putting me in a tough spot. I can't answer. I'm here to work with the parents.
>
> Manning: Dr. Biddle?
>
> Biddle: You're putting me on the spot now. I'll answer as honestly as I can. I think there were some good things done. I would like to see them working with each other again but the point we were at last week there was no choice. It was also not all parent pressure.
>
> Peabody: You mean the teachers realized it?
>
> Biddle: Yes.

The meeting ended with Biddle saying:

> The whole school can be an absolutely magnificent place for kids. I have listened to the parents and I don't hear anybody say we're not willing to work together. I think we have a good beginning.

A smaller meeting. When the meeting ended, groups of parents formed and talked, mainly about the depressant impact that Katie's departure had had on their children. One group formed around Sally, and several parents told her that they regretted what had happened and wished that parents had been more understanding. Biddle joined this group, and when Manning asked him what he thought about the situation he said that he would like to take some time to talk about it. He led the group, which included Sally, Manning, and several other parents, away from the rest. Ellis joined the group a few minutes later.

Sitting on the floor in Jan Holden's classroom, Biddle began the following exchange:

> Biddle: I think if Sally will level with you, there were things that had to be done.
>
> Sally: Sure. But I would like to add that with Ellis' help and Sam's help it could have been worked on.
>
> Mother: In the beginning, at the Oxford School meeting, I said I was willing to give up two years. A normal child can catch up.
>
> Manning: This was a very exciting concept and you've lost it.
>
> Biddle: You haven't.

Manning: I thought if it was having problems some changes should have been made, but not this.

Biddle: Let me say this. I have said this to Sally and others and I wish I had in July. It didn't have an open space concept. It was departmentalization. We threw that out 40 years ago. [There seemed to be some agreement in the group that this was the case.] My ground rule for a new teacher would be to lay down the rules. Let me give you an example. In [my previous district] many years ago we had a teacher who lost the class in two weeks. She came from Bank Street, a good school. She wanted to resign. I said that I would accept her resignation if she got another job. She got a job in [another district] and became an excellent teacher, she got it together. Here's what you do. You say here's a kid who has a problem, can you teach him math. Not departments.

Mother: How should they have started?

Biddle: As they are now, and then they could have flowed out.

Sally: I agree.

Biddle: [to Sally]: Someday I'd like to sit down with you and some others and really discuss the needs of kids.

Manning: Don't you think the teachers have gone through a lot? If I were a teacher in this school I'd be screaming like hell.

Biddle: I would too. I happen to be with your group.

Mother: The parents were against the school before it opened.

Biddle: I know they were.

Mother: In Fernwood there were no complaints. Here every parent seems to want to be an educator.

Biddle: I'm in conflict with myself on that. I think they have a right to voice what they think. But sometimes what they think isn't what should be done. In this country we're doing things that are oppressive.

Mother: Did you see the article in Newsweek, "Why Johnny Can't Write?" [several nodded]

Manning: My husband hires people from around the country and from the best schools and he finds people from Harvard who can't spell.

Biddle: It is a problem. We'll have Harvey Marsh come in -- it's a perceptual problem.

Mother: Let's hope this signals a period of cooperation between parents and teachers.

With this, the small, private meeting ended. Ellis, who said nothing during it, told the researcher immediately after it ended, "I'm fed up." A few minutes later Biddle repeated his earlier evaluation that three weeks ago the school hit bottom, and that it was now on the way up. He continued: "When you get complaints that you've changed too much, gone too far, then it's time to stop."

In this meeting, and in the public one preceding it, Biddle seemed to acknowledge that there had been problems with the NBC team -- but he never was specific. At the same time, he told the small group that he supported the teachers, and never directly criticized them. Instead, he said they had not actually been team teaching. It may have been that from his perspective the school was about to stabilize, and there was thus no reason to upset either parents or teachers further. But Biddle was often vague and sometimes evasive; he relied on a fairly large repertoire of gestures and facial expressions to convey his messages, rather than on precisely-worded statements.* At any rate, his message this evening seemed to be that the school had been changed in ways that the majority of parents desired, even though he and the teachers tended to dissent.

The BJW open house. The setting and atmosphere for this open house was the same as the one the night before. Sixty parents sat in the media center. In the front of the room were Ellis, Sam Pennington, Rebecca Barone, Glenda Jacobs and Jim Jernowicz, an intern in the BJW team. Norbert White, the third teacher in the team, was home ill. In the back of the room were Bob Biddle, Astrid Little, Priscilla Talbot, Wanda Molloy and Laura Bano, an intern in the MTK team.

After Ellis introduced the teachers, Rebecca read the team's instructional schedule, which was the same as the one delivered to parents at the end of the previous week. Parents were then permitted to ask questions. The questions fell into four areas: (1) the use of student profiles, (2) individual study, (3) instructional practices (for example, who corrected papers, whether the SRA reading program was still being used) and (4) if there were any plans for a structure similar to the one in the 2-3 classrooms. As in the 2-3 open house, several parents publicly supported the school. For example:

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* Biddle's comment is:

> This is a value judgment out of context. I was in an observer role, not a participant that night.

> Father: I don't see the problem. I think this school has more parent-teacher interaction than most others. When I get a paper at home and it has two wrong out of 100 I think the parent can judge what that means. I don't see what you are trying to get out of this. I'm very satisfied and we have two children here.

At this open house, too, Ellis used an "outsider" to support his assertions. In this case the outsider was Sam Pennington, who had worked with the BJW team during their reorganization.

One important difference between this meeting and the one preceding it concerned the attitudes of the teachers in the audience. Indeed, at the first meeting the only teachers present had been those in the classes under question. The following exchange illustrates the role of teachers from other classes in this meeting.

> Mr. Lieberman: I still don't understand and others don't. I hear at LAHA meetings that the school isn't trusted, and also in the Washingtonville Courier.
>
> Priscilla Talbot: I think you should speak for yourself.
>
> Library aide: My son had Glenda Jacobs for two years before this and he's here because she came here. He has learned as much as any kid in this district.
>
> Mr. Lieberman: But many feel...
>
> Priscilla Talbot: Please speak for yourself. [Priscilla was sitting near the man and was more or less shouting this at him. He looked embarrassed and stopped talking. The audience seemed tense.]
>
> Chinese father: This meeting is not a personal debate. I think he can say whatever he wants to. It is his right. I agree with him. [He stood to say this and was forceful and somewhat emotional. The questioning continued.]

The meeting ended with a statement from Wanda Molloy. Standing in the back of the room, near Biddle, she said:

> I'd like to say a lot of things. I hear a lot of confusion. You wanted papers and now you don't know what the marks mean. Your children are growing up and they have to see themselves that they are becoming responsible.

> Lincoln Acres is a new school and we're working hard and listening to you. Nobody moves in and furnishes a house in four months. You can't expect us to do the equivalent here.

After the meeting, the teachers answered further parent questions in private. The members of the MTK team present talked with Mrs. Wanamaker, who had written a letter supportive of the school to the editor of the Washingtonville Courier. They had difficulty believing what they thought to be the "picky" nature of the parents' questions, and concluded that the parents didn't understand the essence of education. They also agreed that a major problem with the school had been too much parent access: according to Wanda, "They used to line up to watch NBC."

3. The WEA meeting

Priscilla explained to the superintendent and the researcher that her actions at the meeting and the attendance of other teachers had been to make certain that what happened to the NBC team would not happen to the BJW team. In fact, the teachers were beginning to resist further changes in the school through more formal means.

That afternoon, at the regular meeting of the Washingtonville Education Association, Dori and Regina, the recently elected representatives, presented the situation as they saw it at Lincoln Acres school. Discussion of the school lasted for an hour and a half, with the officers of the association interpreting what they heard as the basis for several possible grievances. Indeed, they wondered why the Lincoln Acres teachers had taken so long to ask for advice. It was agreed that another meeting of teachers, excluding Ellis, should be held at Regina Hanley's home on January 5, 1976, the first day after Christmas vacation, to discuss the situation in the school.

4. Teachers' reactions

Reactions in the 2-3 group. On Friday, Jane said she felt as though the situation had improved, but that she would have liked to continue with the original program, even though her job was easier in a self-contained classroom. She continued: "My program was fine -- it was the other two that didn't work. I wish they had done better."

Sally, Jane's former teammate, felt differently. Ellis had recently observed her teaching; afterward, they had a conference. Sally asked if she was in any danger of being fired, and Ellis replied that he had not made a decision to dismiss her, and that there were two more evaluations to be made. During the conference Sally made several discoveries.

> I didn't know that how I related with parents, record keeping and the testing that I fucked up were all going to be held against me.

She continued:

> My feeling is I'm fighting for my position. He said he's lost faith in me. He said I was the only one on the staff who he doesn't know where I'm coming from. It seems as though he looks at me with contempt. He doesn't trust me any more. We used to have a good relationship. The person I trust the most is Dr. Biddle. He's more of a humanist and has more feeling than Ellis. Most people believe Biddle is trustworthy. Katie still trusts Biddle.

Sally did think that things in her classroom had improved, but went on to say:

> We don't have a resource teacher anymore. Sam's with BJW all of the time. We've got Astrid Little instead who doesn't give me any help, nothing she does is any good. We see her two times a week. I told Ellis that I need help in organization, and I got Astrid Little, she's no help.

In the BB cluster. For Jeanne, things were "going well," but she said she couldn't wait for the year to end. The one bright spot she did see was that the Christmas vacation might provide time for attitudes to change. Additionally, she was pleased that during vacation the school, which in her opinion was filthy, was to be cleaned.62)

In one teacher's view, the problems of the school could be traced to the fact that at the beginning of the year there had been no discussion of "open education" or "open space" by the entire faculty, and that they had simply gone ahead with each team's making its own arrangements. The lack of unity of purpose increased because as the year progressed there was no support from Ellis, he felt.

It should be remembered that teachers and community members alike regarded the BB cluster as the most successful teachers in the school; they were never criticized and found themselves the recipients of many children of parents who were dissatisfied with the BJW team.

5. Ellis reflects

In a lengthy, tape-recorded interview with the researcher on Friday, December 19, 1975, Ellis offered his opinions and interpretations of recent events in the school and discussed his plans for the future.

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62) The vacation time would also be used for the erection of floor-to-ceiling partitions -- the ones promised in the compromise plan of the summer.

Concerning the conflict between the school and the community, Ellis' view was:

> What's happened is that a number of people in the community have just gotten to the end of what they were willing to endure on things they didn't like in the school, and started organizing support for where they were at. They went to the Board meeting [December 1] and did their thing. Those flames have partly been fanned by teachers being unable to be responsive on a one-to-one basis -- the only way that satisfies parents. In those two pods that are completely filled with teachers that do not respond well to direct, one-to-one irate conflict -- there's a problem with that. One kind of parent comes in steamed up -- those teachers aren't the kind of people that know how to deal with that. In the other pods we have teachers who have tempers of their own that the parents learn to respect before the parents push them too far. And the other piece that made it worse is some people said, "I've had it. I'm taking my kid out of here to Fernwood." And people started saying, "What's wrong with the school? People are doing this extreme, drastic act."

Brown also had opinions about teachers' functioning.

> Researcher: Was there anything about those pods besides the personalities?
>
> Brown: They weren't delivering. I have felt really annoyed at some staff members because, for instance, in the 2-3 [NBC] things were set up in a viable way and it just wasn't followed, it _just_ wasn't followed. If it was convenient to skip over something, like spelling, handwriting -- various things that were of big value to the parents -- because something was running on, then it got skipped over. And that cost. The schedule was not adhered to with much of any determination at all, and things were just being left out. Record keeping continued to be a mess and nobody really knew the kids on a really personal basis. It wasn't good.
>
> Researcher: Was this the parents' complaint?
>
> Brown: Not too many of them saw it exactly that way. Usually they had something that was a smaller thing, a paper that came home that didn't make any sense to them, or the kid was upset about something -- there was usually a very specific focus, but taken together, that's what was going on. That's what I was seeing, too. So, I had

had it. I got rid of the weak sister in that pod, and that has had real ramifications all around. A lot of teachers in the school, without openly saying to me, "Are you after my head?" have tightened up their acts. For example, people I've had trouble getting profiles out on time before, got them done and done well. Also, parents in the community who like things about the school, have started to come in and say that, and say it in public meetings. I think part of it is because they're afraid more people and things can get chopped out of the school until they start standing up in support of something.

In the 4,5,6 (BJW) there have been some problems that they couldn't face each other to handle. I think all three of them have been in some ways disappointed with the other two and didn't know how to approach that without treading on personal friendships, and they've put the personal friendships ahead of professional ethics even, during the school day. They can't have their school day relationships and their other personal friendships, and separate the day into segments or let them co-exist or anything, so they failed to criticize each other adequately to get things done.

Researcher: What's an example of a problem like that?

Brown: Rebecca Barone was supposed to bring in a reading program to supplant the SRA kit that started the year and it never happened and nobody ever mentioned it to her.

Researcher: But they were aware that she had made that commitment?

Brown: It was clear that that was her thing. And everybody suffered -- it was one person's responsibility.

Researcher: What was the critical difference between NBC and BJW, if there was one?

Brown: You mean why I chose to go one way rather than the other?

Researcher: Exactly.

Brown: Well, I did not feel that NBC had learned anything about teaming in that time from September to November.

Researcher: What were they doing?

Brown: Well, they were team teaching, but they weren't doing it effectively. They had not learned to do it so effectively that they would do that better than the self-contained thing. I believe the BJW does know how to team better than they know how to do the self-contained thing, and I've seen them in both situations. As well as the fact that the personnel in the 2-3 [MBC] were looking for the security of something simple, and I think were a little nervous about depending on their teammates for their own job security, whereas the people in BJW looked to their teammates to be supportive, because they are very personally supportive of each other, and do know how to team.

Researcher: So you think they had that ability...

Brown: They had that ability. The whole hang-up is personal. It really is. They've got some kind of phony impression that to be friendly with somebody means you're nice to them, so never point out to them that they fucked up on something. I'm meeting so many touchy-feely folks around here -- maybe that's the way. But where I came from, people often made the expression that "I like him because he cares enough to get mad at me." They don't like each other enough to get mad -- they don't value anything enough to take that risk. And they knew that's how they got in trouble, and as we deal with them, it's interesting because they'll be rebellious and say, "I don't like doing this, I resent this, the whole process is absurd, etc.," and they say "Well, this is where it's coming from."

I'm being asked to deliver, I am delivering. I make assumptions about what's being delivered, and I turn around and look and see that those assumptions aren't there. Will somebody tell me that my assumptions are wrong! Somebody tell me it's wrong to assume the kids won't do SRA all year long, that it's wrong to assume they will study handwriting, they will study grammar, and spelling, and then document to me that you did it. And they didn't, and they know they didn't. They back off but they're still kind of pissed off, and I'm trying right now the approach of, "I don't want to read your goddam lesson plans every week, I don't want to keep reading your day-to-day record keeping systems -- it adds a lot of time and is making this job even less pleasant than it already is. But I've got to develop a feeling of security that you are delivering a program, or I know about it, one or the other."

An example came up last night. I was under the impression that SRA would be taken from total program to supplemental

> status -- one or two assignments in SRA a week, kind of a maintenance dosage of that kind of instruction. It was wiped out for two weeks. I turned to Sam and said, "What the hell is going on?" and he said, "There's just too much to do." I said, "Horseshit -- the communication is screwed up! I should have known about it!" And there I am hanging again. I will have to keep up this kind of obnoxious monitoring until that's over with because I've been caught too many times with that kind of stuff.

Ellis' assessment of the other three teams was that there were "substantial interpersonal problems" in each of them.

Later in the interview he reiterated his view presented in the December 11 Washingtonville Courier interview, that, in effect, he had inherited many of the current problems because of Biddle's and the Board's early mistakes in planning the school.

> Maybe I'm copping out on some things that are rightly my own responsibility, but I honestly feel that most of my hassles have been cleaning up somebody else's mess.

He elaborated his comments on responsibilities by recounting the role of the Board of Education from the planning steps to the present.

> And that was a period of time when people were starting to give up working on the Board, and the reactionaries we've got in there now started coming into the Board. And Bob started losing control over the Board. So at that point, I don't know, maybe the Board's responsible since they were hell bent and determined to do the major administrative decisions as a Board function. Maybe if they were being the grassroots rebellion that they claimed to be, they would have picked up on some of this and cleaned it up earlier. I don't know. So I got that mess, and lately I've had to do some things for teachers that I really shouldn't have had to do. This business of bulling through a schedule and bulling through a program description for those two pods that have been in trouble -- that never should have happened.

Later in the conversation, he further expanded the theme of responsibility in one of his self-reflective comments.

> Brown: I figure part of my function is to be a target.
>
> Researcher: Is that a role description?
>
> Brown: Well, it ought to be, because when things are tough there's got to be somebody to blame, which is why

> I make the disclaimer. I don't know whether my being annoyed that I'm cleaning up other people's messes is really accurate -- I don't know whether I'm not doing just the same thing. I would kind of feel bad if that were revealed to me; if I were to discover that about myself,I would feel angry toward Ellis -- so I don't really know. To some extent that has paralyzed me from confronting staff and Board members and Biddle, and saying, "What the hell are you doing to me?"
>
> From their point of view, I hit them with things that the teachers that have been having trouble accept as their hassle -- things that they have brought upon themselves. But they usually come back with, "Well, if the parents had been more trusting we would have worked it out and there would have been no harm done," which is true. So I don't know whether implied in that, they're saying, "Had you kept the parents off our backs like you were supposed to as principal, there would have been no harm done," or "Had you helped me do what I had to do like you were supposed to, there would have been no harm done." I don't know whether that feeling is there or not.

Another theme in the interview was Brown's perception that problems in the district were widespread; he said at least two other principals shared his view. Thomas Flint, the principal of the high school, was confronted with problems such as an inadequate building that antedated his appointment, and was deeply dissatisfied with the Board's policies. Brown then compared his own attitude toward the school board with those of another district elementary school principal.

> Brown: Mal Portnoy is concerned for the same reason I am. He doesn't want to be principal here. He doesn't want any part of open space. He has established himself where he is with his community, which is very different from Lincoln Acres, over at Sawyer and Wright's. He is also an idealistic kind of person, a nice guy, not like me, and sits back and looks dispassionately at the Board and doesn't feel they're the kind of Board he can work with, in a very different way than I would say that. I get to the point where I can't put up with those sons of bitches anymore, but he would just say he believes in different things and his values are different, and some kind of horseshit like that, you know. He's just extremely sincere.

Brown then evaluated the administration in the school district.

> Brown: That's one thing that hit me last night while I was lying awake -- what happens if I really get this particular school put together?

> Researcher: Between now and the end of the year?
>
> Brown: Between now and whenever. I would ultimately get back to confronting the administrative team I work on more and more than I am now -- I would have more and more time to be thinking about the general administrative problems of the district that I participate in and would become more and more disenchanted on the basis of working with a bunch of idiots.

Elaborating the themes of the effects of budget problems and relations with his fellow administrators, Brown also predicted what he thought the next few years would be like in Washingtonville. He also placed his current position within this framework.

> The problem with having this budget thing happen where maybe I won't have this job in another six months, is you start looking around at the whole thing and you get a wider perspective, and you start to appreciate the magnitude of some of this stuff. You say, "Hey, are you a missionary? Do you want to commit yourself to this thing, and that's what you're going to do instead of relaxing evenings for the next 15-20 years of your life, or not?" I can't do it. I can see just as wild and hectic a year next year as this year on new problems, not necessarily in this school but in the district. Part of my responsibility is part of the administrative team. If I'm going to do the excellence in education trip, I wouldn't be able to overlook it. I couldn't sit here and get fat like the rest of the guys.
>
> So that reinforces the thing -- how long do you hang around a situation that is ultimately not viable? That's a bad place to get to because then little things bother you. If you're tired at 5 p.m. you say "What right do they have to work me this hard?" and say "Fuck it," and go home.
>
> It's funny, Lee Whitmore told me last week that she perceived I'd given up two weeks previous to that, and I knew I'd felt differently for the previous two weeks but I hadn't thought of it in that way. But she picked up something. I've decided that I'm not going to sit through the administrative restructuring rehabilitation of this district -- I'm not going to do it. I'm willing to put this school together because it's no big thing -- we've been through the worst, but the hope of being able to last several years until I'm 30 to make a significant jump upward is past.

Returning to the theme of the problems with the administrators in Washingtonville, Brown commented unfavorably on their use of resources.

He compared Washingtonville with the school district in New Hampshire where he had been a principal.

> I just can't imagine what kind of incredible things people [could] get done in New Hampshire with the resources that are spent [here]. It's just so completely out of line it's ridiculous. Teachers in this school make more money than the assistant superintendent did there. As a first year elementary principal I make more than the superintendent did there. We spend more money per pupil for the art program here in terms of supplies than we do for the supply budget in the entire program in all subjects there. That was the only threshold of their own energies and the materials and resources that were provided them all the time. That's not happening here and that's a frustration for me.

Later in the interview he again compared this state with New Hampshire.

> A problem with this state is that you don't feel significant. I felt significant where I was. I was a central figure in the town. I knew the Commissioner of Education for the state. I knew most of the state structure. My mother has the governor's son in school. It's closely knit. Not now. I feel you could take or leave an entire district in this state and make absolutely no difference.

Overall, the comparisons he made have a definite tone: Brown viewed himself as being in an alien world. There is a strong sense of anomie; suburban America is normless, while deep-rooted values and associations in rural areas give life coherence.

Finally, at several points in the conversation, Ellis said that he was planning on leaving his present job. In fact, he was already looking for another. His decision to leave the principalship of Lincoln Acres school was not public knowledge; the faculty and the central administration were unaware of his intention. One of the influences on him, Brown claimed, was the possibility that because of budgetary reasons an elementary school in the district would have to be closed and that as the junior administrator in the district he would lose his principalship. If this happened, Biddle had said to him recently, he would try to find him another position. Ellis commented on this:

> I believe he [Biddle] wants me to remain with the district, and where I'm at, there's far too much work to be done and the satisfaction is so distantly delayed, that I don't know what I'd need at this point to feel secure -- but I'd have to have a hell of a lot more than what I have now!

But even if the possibility of his job being eliminated were to disappear, he wasn't certain what turn his personal career would take.

> I'm all confused. There is a particular teaching opportunity I have in mind. To teach in the same school with a person who is, in my mind, the best open space teacher I've ever seen. That would have been hard to resist under any circumstances that were financially feasible.

Again reflecting on his career, later in the interview, Brown observed:

> Many people have not given one thought to administration when they were 27 and it's been another five years before they got into it and had fine careers. What I'm very fearful of is that I could become one of these precocious people who becomes an administrator when he's 35 and doesn't have the good sense to get out before 65. I don't think there would be enough of my life other than work for those 30 years that I would do anything much. What would be left? So that's where education's at for me.

At no point in the conversation, or for that matter, during the year thus far, did Ellis say that he was leaving the school (or possibly education) because he had performed poorly in the position of principal, or because he was tired of being an educator. He did say, however, that his feeling about the situation in the school was: "I'm sick of it."

6. The Christmas Spirit

In early December, Monica and Dori organized a faculty Christmas party. It was to be held in a local restaurant at a fairly substantial cost for each person. By mid-December, it had become clear that few teachers were interested in participating, and the party was cancelled. Most faculty members attributed this to their low morale, and some objected to Monica's arrangements, mainly because they weren't consulted.

Members of the community became aware of the difficulty the faculty was having in organizing a party, and to show her appreciation one parent invited the entire faculty to her home for December 22, 1975. Shortly afterward, the PTA hurriedly arranged a Christmas party for the faculty to be held on December 23, 1975.

As it turned out, the private party was cancelled. Teachers had heard that the PTA discouraged it on the grounds that the PTA party on the following day was more appropriate. Many teachers thought the PTA action was unwarranted.

The PTA Christmas party was held in the school cafeteria. Since the PTA had only recently been formed, the treasury balance was minimal; only sandwiches and soft drinks could be afforded. Most teachers thought the party was a disaster. Sally's view is representative:

> It was like come on in and sit with your friends -- your camp, people who share your philosophy, and leave. The camps were those who have been struggling and those who have not been. It's not hostile but there was no camaraderie at the party. Ellis sat with Monica as he usually does and things were just polite.

With the faculty Christmas party, school ended until January 5, 1976.

IX. THE DYNAMICS OF REORGANIZATION: AN ANALYSIS

In this chapter we analyze and explain the changes in the school which took place between the first open house and Christmas vacation. It should be apparent that this is a Herculean task.

The reader may well feel adrift in the sea of events described in the preceding chapter, at a loss for satisfactory explanations. We should emphasize that the Lincoln Acres faculty, and the researcher, had the same difficulty as the events unfolded. The teachers often felt overwhelmed, were anxious and increasingly upset, and frequently could not understand what was happening. For some, things became so confusing and disturbing that they abandoned their efforts to make sense of the events in and around the school; they withdrew, insulating themselves from their surroundings. Even the researcher often found himself puzzled and amazed by a new development; the phrase "What next?" often appeared in research project staff meetings when Lincoln Acres was on the agenda.

So we do not expect that disentangling the flow of events and making a coherent set of explanations will be easy. To aid the reader, Chart 9.1 provides a chronological summary of the most salient events described in Chapter VIII.

A. The State of the System

1. Changes in the school

By mid-December, several important changes in the structure of the school had been made. Priscilla was teaching independently and Dori and Wanda functioned only minimally together. The BB cluster no longer attempted team teaching, and had isolated themselves from the rest of the school by building a wall of furniture. The BJW team had reorganized their educational program, including their schedule, with Sam's help. Katie was fired, and her former teammates and her replacement switched to self-contained classrooms. Finally, student interns and parent volunteers supplemented teachers in many classrooms.

These changes had two fairly distinct sources: internal social processes and external conflict. In the cases of the MTK and BB teams, the movement from team teaching to a more-or-less self-contained approach seemed primarily a result of interpersonal processes within the team. We have seen that the problem in MTK was described as being over "personalities" and "philosophies." This team sought assistance from Ellis and Sam that, for a variety of reasons, was not successful. In the BB cluster, one sensed an incompatibility of preferred teaching styles. But the BB teachers did not seem to consider either Sam or Ellis to be useful help sources. Neither the MTK or BB groups experienced conflicts with the parents, and we conclude that they did not succeed in implementing the innovation because of reasons internal to the school.

CHART 9.1
CHRONOLOGY OF DECISIONS AND CRITICAL EVENTS AFTER LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL OPENED

Week	
3	BB cluster delimits area with furniture NBC goes to homogeneous reading groups MTK goes to 2-team and 1 teaching alone (Priscilla)
4	NBC tries "brainwashing" parents Volunteers program implemented in library, MTK PTA Steering Committee organizes Ellis away for 2 days Parent volunteers begin work
5	Ellis away for 3 days Frisch visits and criticizes Board pushes basic skills emphasis
6	NBC begins phonics program Parent visits increase
7	Ellis away for 3 days Ellis considers suspending Priscilla
8	NBC has 2 open houses BJW open house (upsetting, Ellis absent)
9	Parent conferences Ellis says Priscilla is unfit to teach Transfer requests begin
10	Ellis is away for entire week Transfer requests increase Faculty is depressed, dissatisfied Norbert holds coffeeklatsch - bad
11	Vitelli letter criticizes school and NBC Board members visit school First PTA meeting
12	Frisch transfers his child; 6 other NBC transfers
13	Biddle intervenes - sends in Little and Stein Tumultuous Board meeting Golden and Schwartz transfer their children BJW restructures their work with Sam's help NBC reorganization plan (with Little) to self-contained Ellis announces intention to fire Katie

Week

14 Katie contests; WEA representatives meet with Biddle and Ellis; Katie reassigned
Faculty begins mobilizing for support
NBC begins self-contained teaching
Katie leaves

15 2-3 (formerly NBC) holds open house; first signs of parent positive emphasis
BJW open house; other teachers defend BJW, attack parents
WEA decides to hold January meeting to consider grievances
Ellis has started looking for another job

On the other hand, changes in the NBC and BJW teams were initiated primarily by sources external to the school. Increasing parent pressure resulted in Biddle's radical intervention of assigning Astrid Little and Harriet Stein to organize NBC, and Sam Pennington to reorganize BJW. Ellis' removal of Katie as a teacher in Lincoln Acres school was also driven by parent complaints. In these instances, although the pressure for change was initiated by parents, the school's internal social relationships were weak enough that it proved difficult to resist the demands effectively. Basically, there was an inability to solve problems.

2. Sources of problem-solving inadequacy

One of the chief difficulties with problem-solving grew from a structural weakness: the absence of team leaders. This position was never created, apparently because the teachers wanted egalitarian relationships among themselves; a team leader would be a position with higher rank than the rest of the team members. But without team leaders -- who could have met and worked regularly with Ellis -- communication, interteam coordination, assignment of responsibility, problem-solving, and even following through on decisions were all very difficult.

And within teams, maintaining egalitarian relationships was not easy; there was a continual conflict between affective and instrumental norms. There were several examples where team members did not confront their peers with their failures. An accountable team leader could probably have been more direct.

Many problem-solving efforts turned out to exacerbate the conditions they were trying to resolve. For example, the idea of using parent volunteers, a strategy for coopting critical parents, boomeranged as parents collected more and more information with which to attack the school. Several of the open houses, aimed at "explaining" the program and improving relationships with parents, created more confusion, doubt and hostility.63)

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63) In the 10th week, for example, Bert not only failed to explain and defend the BJW program, but actually cast doubt on the competence of the team's work.

Biddle's intervention, a response to what appeared to be internal difficulty in solving problems and making adjustments, severely limited the autonomy of the faculty and led eventually to more conflict. Ellis' authority, already declining because of his inability to manage a variety of situations effectively, was further undercut when Biddle, in effect, took over the leadership of the school, by ordering Little, Stein and Pennington to reorganize its troubled parts.* By this time, the teachers were no longer in a position to influence decisions in any significant way either: the sense of powerlessness and depression grew.

Mistrust of Ellis also grew, and his authority was eroded further because the norms of the group no longer supported it. (Blau, 1964) This was especially true after the teachers learned he had fired Katie. As we have seen, teachers themselves began to take measures that would reestablish their authority.

So, in general, during the process of trying to adjust to external demands, the social structure of the organization changed substantially. The major difficulty in the social system of the school can be seen as its inability to adjust to its environment without radically altering central features of the innovations being attempted.

3. Actualization

Linkages between planning and implementation weakened as the conflict between the school and community progressed. Faculty meetings were held less frequently, and in general communication within teams, among teams and between the teachers and administration decreased. As we have noted, trust between the teachers and administration also decreased.

In addition, the objectives lists (profiles) in several cases were not ready for use until several weeks into the school year, and even then were not routinely filled out by teachers. Similarly, no mention was made of the brainstormed lists of team roles and decision-making areas developed during the summer. The objectives and role-description lists were not only potential linkages between planning and implementation, but also coordination mechanisms; their infrequent use suggests that the school was not well coordinated -- in effect, was drifting.

Further evidence of drift, lack of coordination and thus failure to couple planning and implementation can be noted in the behavior of the administrators. Ellis, often absent felt as though he spent much of his time "firefighting." Sam was uncertain what his role was, until he was assigned to work directly with the BJW team. Biddle essentially took a laissez-faire approach to the situation* until Lincoln Acres problems were substantial enough to threaten the operation of other schools in the district as a result of transferred students. While these behaviors were in part responsive to conditions in the organization, they also inadvertently contributed to problem-intensification.

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* Biddle's comment is:

> [The paragraph is] a value laden statement. I was criticized for not doing it long before. It was [also] by agreement with Brown.

B. Implementation Success

In terms of the first three criteria of implementation success presented in Part I, the Lincoln Acres school had experienced little, if any, success by December 23, 1975. It will be recalled that these criteria are: goal-congruence, problem-coping ability, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Few of the original goals survived. As we have already noted, team teaching (except for BJW), open space education, and shared decision-making were no longer part of the school. Individualization of instruction was partially achieved. To a large extent the original goals were replaced with the single goal of simply surviving for the rest of the year.

A substantial cause of the loss of the original vision was the inability of the school to solve major problems effectively. Of course, the problems the school faced were considerable and in many instances highly complex. The important point, however, is that when adjustments were made that finally "solved" the problems, they substantially altered the original vision or goals in the process.

Satisfaction for teachers diminished as the year progressed, and increased almost inversely for parents. In other words, as the original, teacher-formulated vision of the school eroded, causing lowered teacher morale and loss of energy, the community demands were being increasingly satisfied. This may at first appear to be a perverse view of the situation, but it can be argued that despite the abandonment of most goals, one of the major unachieved goals of the summer workshop -- responsively-oriented involvement of parents in education -- had been accomplished to a considerable extent after four months of operation. So for one set of stakeholders, the teachers, the enterprise was a disaster. For another set of stakeholders, the parents (at least a sizable number of them), satisfaction was eventually considerable. Chart 9.2 illustrates the parents' increased satisfaction with the school. Unfortunately, no comparable quantitative data are available for teachers, but it is clear that their satisfaction decreased as the year progressed. Our hunch is that data for teachers would be similar to the dotted line on Chart 9.2.

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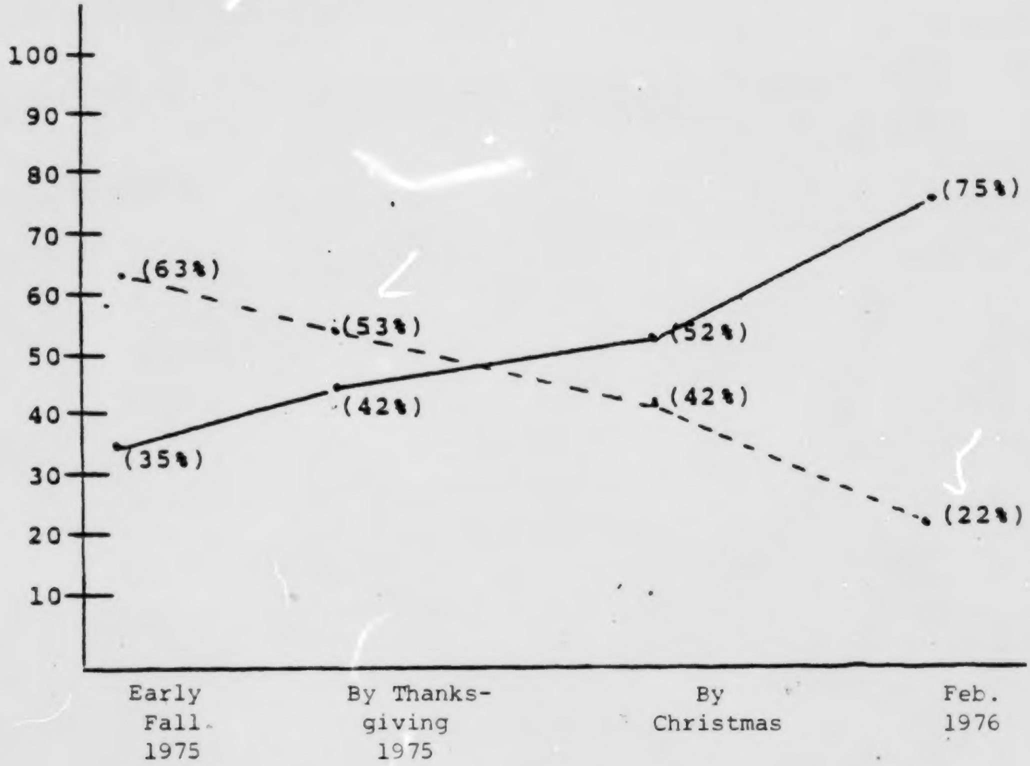
* Biddle disputed this conclusion, and the "laissez-faire" label very strongly, saying "Not so, absolutely not so." He explained that he had repeatedly given very specific help to Ellis without results. In any case, he emphasized, a superintendent cannot "rescue" a principal, without, in effect, destroying him. He acknowledged that he had been immersed in many other problems, and had also misread the community based on his contact with the earlier residents of Lincoln Acres. "But laissez-faire, no way."

CHART 9.2
PARENT RETROSPECTIVE RATINGS OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE*



——— Combined responses: "Outstanding", "very good", and "good".
- - - - Combined responses: "Fair", "rather poor", and "extremely poor".

* The questionnaire items, answered in February, were as follows:

> There are often rapid changes in new organizations. We would like to know your attitude toward the Lincoln Acres School at various times.
>
> a. What kind of job do you think the school did in the first weeks that it was open in the fall of 1975? (response mode: outstanding, very good, good, fair, rather poor, extremely poor)
>
> Items b through d repeated the question in relation to these time periods: "by about Thanksgiving"; "the period shortly before Christmas"; "right now" (Feb.)

C. Political Stabilization

One of the central questions raised by the preceding chapter is: Why did parents react to the school as they did? The answer -- we think there is one -- is complex. The following areas will be examined: (1) elements of the summer conflict that remained once the school opened; (2) the charge of teacher incompetence; and (3) characteristics of the community.

1. Residual conflict

By the beginning of school, 86 percent of the parents disagreed with the statement: "By the time school opened in the fall all problems between school personnel and community members had been settled." Although this percentage may be inflated somewhat, since the question was answered in February, after the conflict had heightened considerably, it was clear that after the summer compromise many parents were still not satisfied, or only partially pleased, with the plans for the school. Perhaps more importantly, the conflict over the summer undoubtedly signalled to the community that without constant monitoring, the educators were likely once again to implement their own plans. (Such suspicions were not entirely unfounded; note that the walls which were part of the summer compromise were not in fact installed until January.) In general, the community did not have a high level of trust in the educators. The political base of the school was substantially reduced as a result of the first waves of the conflict; the tension between democratic and professional values remained.

It seems probable that the parents' lack of trust in the school increased their desire to observe classrooms in action. Though Ellis and the teachers were at best ambivalent about parent contact with the school, Ellis did invite parents to visit the school during the day, and few controls were instituted on visiting in spite of repeated teacher complaints. The volunteer program moved ahead actively. Open houses and parent conferences were held. In brief, any parent who wanted to could observe teachers directly in their role performance. High teacher observability was facilitated by the architecture of the school.64)

The following data from the parent questionnaire indicate the frequency of contact parents said they had had with the school. Table 9.1 represents the respondents' "best estimate [February] of the number of contacts you or a member of your family have had this year with the school since it opened." We see, for example, that 108 parents, or 91% of those replying, had attended one or more school-wide parent-teacher conferences; 84% came to one or more open houses; and 75% had special conferences with their child's teacher.

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64) Recall that Mrs. Frisch, who volunteered for work in the media center, said that from there she could see all of the teams at work except for MTK and the kindergarten, who were behind walls.

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TABLE 9.1

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH THE SCHOOL SINCE IT OPENED

	Number of Contacts Reported*						
	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Total co tactin
a. School-wide teacher-parent conferences	10	52	31	13	10	2	108
b. Special conferences with the teacher, excluding school-wide teacher-parent conferences	29	39	28	12	7	3	89
c. School-wide open house	19	70	18	10	1	0	99
d. Contacted by telephone to discuss behavior, school work, etc.	69	21	14	5	3	6	49
e. School organization meeting, such as PTA, parents' associations, etc.	32	49	27	6	0	4	86
f. After-school activities, such as adult education classes, recreation programs, committee meetings, etc.	88	11	11	1	1	6	30
g. Sent notes to school	48	20	23	9	10	8	70
h. A teacher visited your home	111	5	1	1	0	0	7
i. Casual or accidental contact, just happening to be in the same place as a teacher	66	16	18	4	5	9	52

*N of parents responding = 118

Table 9.2 presents the data from another questionnaire item: "If you or your husband have had direct visits to the school, please check those items which describe the reasons for the visits."

It should be apparent from both tables that for a period of five months[65] parents visited the school frequently. Naturally, most parents (90%) went to discuss their child's achievement. But particularly important is the high number of parents who acted as volunteers in the classroom (63 parents, or 53% of respondents); media center (9%); or other parts of the school (13%). Beyond this, 58% visited to "see how your child's class was running," and 45% to "see how the school was running in general." Multiple visits were frequent, and parents had the opportunity to see the school under a variety of conditions (not only on open house night) and in many cases once or more each week. This brings us to consideration of teacher competence; a major charge of parents was that members of the NBC and BJW teams were incompetent.

2. Teacher competence

Judging teacher competence does not seem to be a simple matter. In most current educational practice, the tendency is to rely on "objective" -- or at least observable -- markers such as academic credentials, the teacher's "control" over a class or the physical condition of the classroom, at least as much as on student output measures such as standardized test scores. Teaching-process measures, such as plan books, report cards with teachers' evaluations of students, and judgments of interpersonal competence are less frequently invoked. And it is quite rare to make any direct test of the teacher's knowledge of subject matter or techniques, once he or she has left college or university.[66]

This ambiguity about the best way to assess teacher competence certainly appeared at Lincoln Acres. But it was somewhat offset there

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65) Since the questionnaire was administered in February, data for January were also included. In most instances, parental contact with the school either ended or was minimal after December. For example, there were no open houses after December.

66) In fact, administrators -- department chairmen, principals, superintendents -- are also relatively immune from any systematic evaluation of what they know, or the way they actually perform their duties. Although this theme cannot be expanded here, there is evidence that American society is undergoing a crisis of evaluation (and thus control) over many occupations: witness the rise in malpractice suits against doctors, or the increasing distrust of politicians. On the other hand, there have been recent attempts to gain insulation from evaluation -- such as the steelworkers' demand for guaranteed life-time employment.

TABLE 9.2

REASONS FOR VISITS TO THE SCHOOL SINCE IT OPENED

	Number of Visits*						
	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Totals
a. Helping out in the classroom	55	6	11	9	5	32	63
b. Helping out in the media center	107	3	0	1	0	7	11
c. Helping out in some other part of the school	102	4	0	1	1	10	16
d. Attending some of the children's activities (plays, concerts, sports)	83	26	6	1	0	2	35
e. To discuss your child's academic and social achievement	12	30	34	19	13	10	106
f. To see how your child's class was running	49	32	24	4	0	9	69
g. To see how the school was running in general	65	30	16	0	1	6	53
h. To talk to a teacher about something of immediate importance (without an appointment)	74	21	21	6	1	4	44

*N of parents responding = 118

by the fact that parent educational expertise was high. Frisch, a major critic of NBC, was an acknowledged expert in reading, but more than this, fully 29% of parents who answered our questionnaire indicated that they had been teachers at one time or another. Thus the questions parents directed to teachers were not general and vague ones, but highly specific questions which demanded specific answers[67] that were in turn further questioned if they were found inadequate. In other words, given high observability and high expertise, the parents' scrutiny of teachers was intense; at one meeting, Board member Robert Klahr doubted if any other school in the district could survive the close monitoring that Lincoln Acres school had had. We suspect that few schools anywhere could be held as "accountable" as Lincoln Acres was without serious deficiencies appearing in the process.

By pointing this out, we do not mean to imply that any of the Lincoln Acres teachers were totally competent; it is at least possible that they could have been more effective, in spite of their colleagues' claims of teaching effectiveness. The teacher questionnaires asked, "On the basis of your experience and information, how would you rate the quality of teaching that the students generally receive from this school?" The responses were: 4 (17%) outstanding; 15 (62%) very good; 4 (17%) good; 1 (4%) fair. The responses, "rather poor" and "extremely poor" received no answers. So the teachers rated their colleagues as having fairly high teaching skills. Substantial differences seemed to exist between teacher and parent evaluations of the ability of teachers in Lincoln Acres school. To understand this discrepancy, we need to look at the conditions under which teacher "competence" was being defined.

Recall, first, that for all practical purposes, the MTK team never functioned as a team. Similarly, the BB team began functioning essentially as self-contained classrooms (by their own account) by about the middle of October. Neither of these teams experienced the conflict with parents that the NBC and BJW teams did. In fact, by December, parents were asking why NBC and BJW hadn't patterned themselves after these two "teams," because parents were satisfied with them and they appeared to have no problems. Furthermore, when NBC was reorganized with Astrid Little's assistance, the teachers decided to borrow elements of MTK and BB's work in the shift from team teaching to three self-contained classrooms -- an explicit acknowledgement that these two "teams" had ceased to function as teams.

This set of circumstances offers a partial explanation of the conflict that NBC and BJW had with parents -- and a deep irony. The explanation is that these teams were the innovative teams in the school --

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67) Notice the detail of the responses in Ellis' interview in the Washingtonville Courier on December 11 -- or the comments made in the December 1 Board meeting.

the others had not even partially implemented the innovations -- and, although less than perfect teacher competence, some mismanagement and other variables intervened, the basic cause of parent reaction was the nature of the innovations being attempted. The irony is that by their rapid failure to implement the innovations, the MTK and BB teams provided a form of education that the parents could not only identify with, but considered successful. As a result the non-implementing teams created the unanticipated outcome of providing a well-controlled educational situation that served as a kind of backdrop, against which the difficulties to be expected in the implementation of an educational innovation stood out in sharp relief. The MTK and BB teams made whatever innovations NBC and BJW succeeded in implementing look much more chaotic than would have been the case if all teams were trying to innovate. Evaluation is a comparative process; the innovative teams were being compared to the "traditional" ones, and were found wanting.

The idea that dissatisfaction with the innovations was a strong contributing cause of the opposition to the school is further supported by the fact that once the reorganizations were made, opposition ceased. Of course, many parents had transferred their childred to other schools or other classes, thereby reducing their continued need to criticize the school. But as we have seen, most of the parents who considered transferring their children decided not to; all of the classes in Lincoln Acres school from the middle of December through June were self-contained, with slight variations. As we shall see -- except for some problems between the school and the executive committee of the PTA -- there were no conflicts with the community for the remainder of the year, and no teacher was accused of being incompetent.

3. Community variables

In the early stages of the conflict, the central issue was the legitimacy of the plans for the school. The specifications of the bond issue had not been honored, many citizens felt, and through petitions and public meetings the bulk of public opinion appeared to be that democratic values should prevail over professional values. Barbara Collins and members of the LAHA executive committee were among the educational opinion leaders of the community at the time.

Once the school opened, although the issue of the role of democratic versus professional values was still present, it was surpassed by conflict between two sets of experts: those within the school and those who were community members. The change in the power base of the community toward expertise, which was evident in their detailed criticisms, directly challenged and diluted the teachers' ability to make the claim that they were the experts. The community opinion leaders were now educational experts like Frisch, and "quasi-insiders" in the local educational system such as Golden, Schwartz and Berger. And many parents had claims to educational expertise as a result of teaching experience.

The influence of the community educational experts and others was great. Several Lincoln Acres residents told the researcher that events in the new school were a continuous topic at cocktail parties, in the local supermarket and on the streets. Rumors spread quickly, and the opportunity to witness the school first-hand -- either to confirm or disconfirm rumors -- was great. LAHA meetings, Board of Education meetings and the local newspaper also supplied information, and amplified the sense that there were problems in the school. Ellis recognized this communication pattern when he commented:

> And the other piece that made it worse is some people said, "I've had it. I'm taking my kid out of here to Fernwood." And people started saying, "What's wrong with the school? People are doing this extreme, drastic act."

Although it is difficult to measure the impact of parent transfer requests -- in particular Dr. and Mrs. Frisch's -- they did seem to influence other parents to take a closer look at their child's class -- and in many cases to follow suit.

Another possible explanation of the parents' aggressiveness toward the school is that they simply wanted to assert their presence. There are some indications that this occurred early in Lincoln Acres history, when LAHA aggressively sought political power. However, recent studies of new suburban communities (Berger, 1960; Gans, 1967) have indicated that most behavior does not change substantially with a change in residence from an urban to a suburban community. Social class and life cycle variables provide more powerful explanations than residential location (Gans, 1962).

The majority of heads of households in Lincoln Acres were professional or managerial-level employees. Additionally, 19% of the fathers of families responding to the questionnaire had some college training, 31% were college graduates and 37% had some post-graduate education. For mothers, 25% had some college, 31% were college graduates and 9% had done post-graduate work. If we juxtapose these data with those on the purchase price of homes[68] in Lincoln Acres, (which in 1975 sold for between $50,000 and $70,000) it is clear that most of these families were stable middle-class, and not new to this socio-economic stratum.

Along with the high educational attainment and occupational status of these families was the fact that they were young. Some were still involved in the early phases of child rearing (children not yet in school); others' children were in elementary school or about to attend junior high school. To middle class families in this stage of the life

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68) No data on income were collected and none are available.

cycle, schooling is an important aspect of life. Additionally, substantial numbers of Oriental and Jewish families lived in Lincoln Acres, two groups with high educational aspirations (Coleman, 1966). We conclude that commitment to educational attainment, as a function of family life cycle stage -- and in some cases ethnicity -- was more salient than sheer community newness or residential location in heightening parents' preoccupation with the quality of education their children were receiving.

The interaction of distrust in the educators remaining from the summer conflict, expertise among the community members, positions of authority that several members held (Peabody and Frisch on the Board of Education and Golden as Board attorney), opportunities to visit the school, social class and life cycle contributed to community interest in the school and the reactions to it.

It should be noted, however, that the community was not monolithic: not all residents were opposed to the school and not all of those who opposed it did so for the same reasons. However, those residents whose opposition to the school had the largest impact -- that is, resulted in changes -- held substantially similar views. In the first wave of the conflict, they formed a coalition around the demand for alternatives to open education and enforcement of the bond issue specifications. In the second wave of the conflict, once the school opened, a temporary coalition[69)] was formed around the issue of teacher and administrative incompetence. It should also be noted that for the most part the teachers perceived those members of the community opposed to their efforts as somewhat more organized and like-minded than they actually were. That was understandable, since it wasn't until major changes in the school had been made that prior parent support for the innovations became visible.

D. Concluding Comments

The pattern of relationships between the school and community (and subsequently within the school) during this period was increasingly one of force and force threat. Essentially, the school attempted to deal with threats from the community (e.g., student transfer) by making minor adjustments (reorganizing the NBC reading program and staging open houses). Unsuccessful in these attempts -- in effect, forced to make further changes to prevent more transfers -- the administration of the

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69) As we shall see in the next chapters, one result of these temporary coalitions was the formation of a more durable coalition between Sylvia Peabody, Rob Goldman and Anthony Bonomi. In the next Board of Education elections, Peabody supported the successful candidacy of Bonomi and Goldman. Once on the Board they formed a part of the conservative bloc.

school (Biddle and Brown) reorganized the school unilaterally, without the collaboration of the teachers. As a symbol to both the community and the faculty of the depth of the changes, a teacher was charged with incompetence and forcibly removed from her position. This symbolic action ended the conflict.

But social processes go on. As we shall see in the next chapter, the use of force within the school created a counterforce; the teachers mobilized in opposition to the administration in an attempt to re-establish professional privilege.

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X. THE REMAINDER OF THE FIRST YEAR

Following the resolution of the conflict between the school and community, the accumulated tensions within the school resulted in a conflict between the teachers and the administration. As we shall see, the shift in focus of the conflict was primarily the result of the teachers' reaction to the way Brown had managed the community conflict, and the consequences of his actions for the school.

A. The Teachers Assert Themselves

On the first day of school after Christmas vacation, the faculty, minus Ellis and Sam,70) met semi-secretly at Regina Hanley's house for the purpose of discussing actions to be taken to improve their situation. Also present was Rita Colazzi, the president of WEA, which had urged that the teachers initiate a grievance against Brown.

A wide variety of topics was discussed: the BJW and NBC reorganization, the recent behavior of Ellis and Sam; how to deal with parents in the future; and, in general, the ways in which the original plans for the school had been abandoned.

In brief, it was the consensus of the teachers that the school had been reorganized in reaction to unjustified complaints by parents, without a fair attempt to correct the situation in other ways; they saw Ellis, not themselves, as responsible for the problems. Biddle was viewed as being without blame; his role was minimized because, in the teachers' view, Ellis had not informed him of the difficulties in the school. Indeed, Biddle was viewed as a supporter of the teachers, since he had refused to fire Katie as Ellis desired. Concerning Sam, there was agreement that he had become ineffective, due to the confusion over whether he was an administrator and thus an evaluator or a resource to aid teachers. The teachers also wondered what had happened to the role descriptions and other plans they had formulated during the summer workshop. They concluded that Ellis had ignored them because he did not want to be constrained by them.

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70) Sam was at first to be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that he was an administrator and had sided with Ellis in the reorganization of the BJW team. But after further discussion, the teachers decided to explain their attitudes to him, and present him with the option of attending the meeting or not. As it turned out, Sam defined himself as an administrator and decided not to attend the meeting. This episode further illustrates the resource teacher's role ambiguity.

1. Actions against Ellis

Several actions were discussed and agreed on. The first was that a grievance would be filed against Brown on the basis that his inability to maintain a clean building indicated his poor administrative qualities.[71] With the guidance of the WEA president, the teachers reviewed the procedures for filing a grievance and decided that to insure being successful, they would follow all rules regulating grievances meticulously.

After a discussion of the increased paper work demands that Ellis was now making on teachers (for example, daily submission of lesson plans), someone observed that he routinely produced three copies of all paper work and kept one for his files. As a result, the action decided on was for teachers to keep careful records of all of Ellis' activities in the event that documentary proof was needed.

Another complaint, resulting in a proposed action, was that there were no opportunities to discuss the problems of the school with Ellis. Teachers pointed out that in faculty meetings before Christmas, agenda items submitted by teachers had been ignored by Ellis. In response to this, Rita Colazzi told the teachers that according to their contract they were permitted time to present their concerns during faculty meetings. If they wanted to, she said, this could be the basis of another grievance. The group decided, however, that instead of filing another grievance, Jeanne, Priscilla, and Dori would ask Ellis on the following morning for a faculty meeting for the following Monday -- with a teacher-generated agenda. Following from the decision to maintain documentation of all transactions between Ellis and teachers, they also decided that at least one witness and one secretary should be present at all meetings between Ellis and a teacher.

In response to a lengthy discussion of Ellis' failure to control parents' access to the school, Rita Colazzi suggested that the teachers hold talks with groups of parents in their homes. She explained that WEA had recently held a communications workshop for developing Koffee-klatch skills to enable teachers to build support among parents for the upcoming bond issue; the same training could be put to the use of informing parents of the problems with the school, persuading them of the soundness of the present educational programs, and, if necessary, enlisting their support in seeking Ellis' removal. After some prodding by Colazzi, the teachers agreed to the idea and a verbal skills communication workshop was arranged for January 29 at Regina Hanley's house.

Another strategy discussed for registering displeasure with Ellis was that teachers could make requests for transfers to other schools.

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71) Cleanliness was not at the heart of the teachers' complaint, but was chosen because of its concreteness. The history of cleanliness in the school was a long one; it reached back to the first faculty meetings in the fall.

No one actually made this commitment, but Bert and Priscilla said they were seriously considering it. When Jeanne announced that Alan had already requested a transfer, several teachers were astonished: for example, Sally said: "I thought Alan liked it here, and he is doing so well."

In sum, the teachers remained bewildered by recent events; their anger and intent to take actions to improve their situation increased over the Christmas recess. Their solidarity was based on the perception that the administration or the parents -- at any time, for any reason -- could vociferously question the way teachers performed their responsibilities. To decrease their individual vulnerability, they evolved the basic tactic of enforcing the rules available to control Brown's behavior; until now his administrative style had lacked a predictable pattern. Along with this controlling function, the rules were to serve as instruments of harrassment and punishment; many in the group desired to create an atmosphere uncomfortable enough to force Brown to seriously consider whether he wanted to remain principal of Lincoln Acres school.

2. The teachers arrange a faculty meeting

On Tuesday, January 6, Dori, accompanied by Jeanne and Priscilla (who both took notes), met with Ellis. Acting as spokesperson for the faculty, she informed Brown that a grievance was being filed against him for the custodial conditions of the school, and that he had until Monday, January 12, to respond to it or further action would be taken. Dori also told him that the teachers wanted to itemize issues for a faculty meeting on January 12. Disturbed by this, Brown claimed that it was his prerogative to set the agenda. To counter this, Dori said that the contract specified that teachers were permitted to influence the agenda. Brown acquiesced, and later that week he was presented with an 11-item agenda generated by the teachers. It appeared on the bulletin board as follows:

* * * * *

Given to Ellis 1/6/76 3:30 before posting or distribution.

Faculty meeting agenda for January 12, 1976

1. Policy on lesson plans
2. Policy on profiles
3. Parent visitation policy
4. Evaluation process
5. Definitions we decided on as our roles (summer report -- we need a copy of the "handbook".)
6. Discussion of proper procedure for dealing with parent concerns.
7. Role of resource teacher
8. P.T.A. -- faculty role
9. Recording minutes of meetings
10. Report going to Board concerning school
11. WEA report of meetings

* * * * *

During the week, in an attempt to reduce the tension in the school, Ellis wrote notes to a few teachers hoping that their relationship with him would not be weakened because of recent events. He also announced that January 16, a day reserved for all schools in the district to work on math objectives, would be used instead by the Lincoln Acres faculty to work on unspecified "school business."

B. Walls Arrive

The walls that had been part of the July compromise were installed in the instructional area on January 12, 1976 (see Diagram VII). They changed the atmosphere of the school considerably; it was now much more difficult to observe the classes.

Several teachers still considered the walls unnecessary while others were relieved that they had arrived. For example, Sam said that although the walls were ugly they were needed because:

> Teachers haven't taught the kids how to talk in an appropriate voice. That is necessary if the space is going to be open. We spent a lot of time on that in Oxford school.

Sally accepted the walls with resignation and relief. She said:

> I don't mind them. I have some place to hang things now. If they had been up sooner we could have avoided a lot of our problems. Mrs. Frisch wouldn't have been able to see us from the library.

C. The Faculty Meets with Ellis

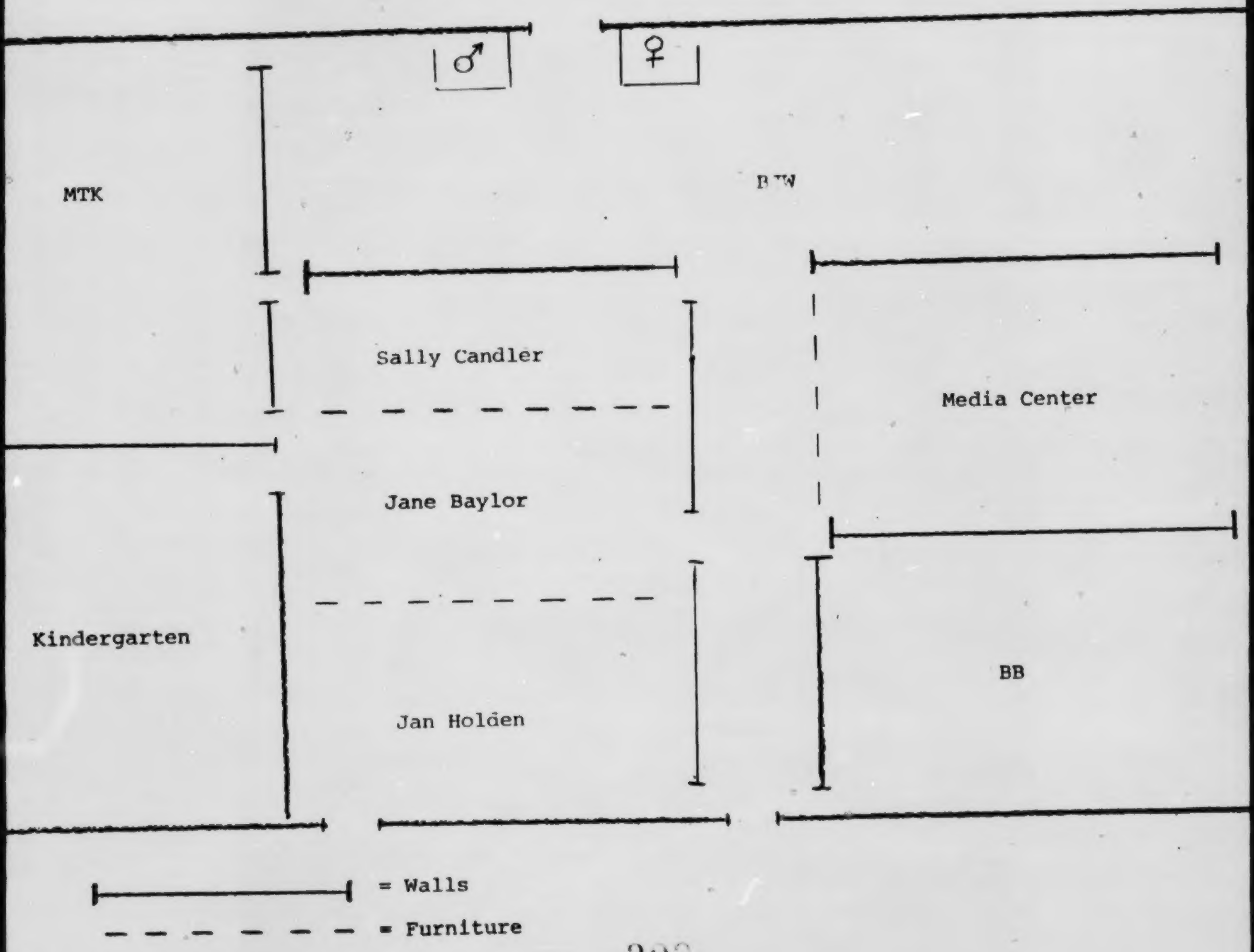
With Alice Houghton appointed by the teachers as their secretary, the faculty meeting began. Ellis was more subdued than usual and there was a sense of tension as he reviewed the agenda items.

The first item, lesson plans, developed into a discussion of the reorganization of the BJW team. The tone and content of the meeting are evoked in the following passages from the field notes.

> Bert: It seems like a question of if we want to lay down to power. I wasn't at the meeting (the second BJW open house) -- I was sick -- but it seems that the people who are busting their backs are getting hit over the head. It seems not well planned and arbitrary. I've taught a lot and this is the worst it's been. The lesson plans are a symptom of what's going on. It seems like a classic case of the "squeaky-wheel-gets-the-grease." I'm tired of getting greased.

DIAGRAM VII

LOCATION OF WALLS INSTALLED ON JANUARY 12, 1976


♂
♀
MTK
B[illegible]W
Sally Candler
Media Center
Jane Baylor
Kindergarten
BB
Jan Holden
= Walls
= Furniture

Ellis: Well, erh, erh.... We can deal with the squeaky wheel now; there may not be any reason to have lesson plans now. I've put in time in various areas of the school only to have a parent say at a Board meeting that it wasn't being done. It's a tough way. We need, like Glenda said, a way of communicating.

Bert: I feel like it's being imposed and that's not good. It just seems like everything comes at a crisis point and nothing is evolved in a logical set of steps.

Ellis: It's funny that we're agreeing, Bert. We're coming from the same place. I don't want another crisis in BJW -- not to single anyone out. If I can look and see what's going on on a weekly basis, then we're not going to go into another crisis. That's where I'm at.

Bert: My problem is I don't know where we're at. I'm operating on blind trust. In BJW spelling was going on. The story coming out was that none was being done and the same with reading. It was being done less formally than now. When we walked into that meeting we were asked what basal [reader] do we want. I remember that we talked about a variety of ways to teach reading early.

Ellis: Just to clarify. I've had no problem with the multi-test math you use and have told parents [that]. But when people ask me where kids are reading and I can't find out, that's bad. This is the state Right to Read head asking.

Bert: There was no step in there where you could come to us and work with us instead of the crisis? I had no feeling that there was a crisis. Some things were wrong but we were operating at our own level. If I heard things were that bad I wouldn't have gone to Rolling Ridge [the outdoor education camp].

Ellis: I don't like to communicate hysteria.

Bert: Well, that was hysteria. If this is only for my team maybe we can meet later.

Sarah: I'd like to know what's going on. All we ever know about is through rumors.

Priscilla: I think there is a feeling that, "it could happen to us." I think this discussion should continue.

The discussion did continue with a recounting of the reorganization process of the BJW team, especially whether it was "imposed" on the teachers and what Sam's role in it had been. After an emotional series of charges and countercharges the discussion on this item concluded:

> Bert: I feel numb now -- at first it was shock. That piece was painful. If it's going to be that kind of aggravation, I'll pack my bags and go elsewhere.
>
> Ellis: That's ditto for me. I don't want to walk around with it. That's why I'm here. I don't want to be an idiot administrator. I want a written program. I have to have something to stand up there with when I'm being shot at [by parents]. You can write it.

The next agenda item, student profiles, was quickly discussed with the resolution that they would continue to be used. They would not only be checked by Ellis, but could be used as part of the evaluation of a teacher's performance.

The meeting then turned to the key issue of parent access to the school. Teachers proposed plans such as escorting parents through the school and having only certain times on specified days for parent visitation. Ellis resisted these proposals:

> I want you to appreciate the impact -- this is a delicate moment. I think you're saying, "we don't trust you."

From the teachers' point of view, creating good will or trust with the parents was a secondary matter: they wanted to be protected from them. Though he was not in agreement with the teachers' strong demand for stringent controls on parents, Ellis nonetheless agreed to draft a set of rules governing parent access to and behavior in the school.

The main problem that surfaced concerning teacher evaluation was that the criteria were not clear. Several teachers also commented that they found Ellis' observations of them intrusive and disruptive of their instructional activities. The outcome was that evaluation procedures would be "improved", and that teachers would have an opportunity to influence the process. Because it was getting late, the remaining agenda items were put off until Friday afternoon, as were reorganization plans for the following year.

Finally, the grievance against Ellis was discussed. In accordance with the formal procedure requiring a progress report five days after the initiation of the grievance, Ellis explained that he had fired the custodian and taken steps to improve the appearance of the school. Several teachers indicated that they did see improvements but the majority was still dissatisfied. After his report, Ellis left. The teachers then voted to continue the grievance by formally initiating the second step, which was the presentation of a written grievance to Ellis.

(1. Commentary)

This meeting marked the first faculty-wide attempt to discuss the disorganization of the past few months openly, and to find ways to prevent its recurrence. From the teachers' point of view, Ellis, the Board of Education and the parents had all disregarded their professional judgment and abilities, violated due process, and had, essentially, overreacted. Ellis stressed that he felt the teachers had not met their responsibilities: profiles were not properly kept, information was distorted, and teachers did not handle individual parents well. In general, although some concessions were made by both sides, the meeting was essentially an accusatory confrontation. Indeed, the tactics the teachers had devised to delimit Ellis' power -- and the power of the parents -- were already being used. Through confrontation, the role confusion that marked the first half of the year was being reduced; constraints were being applied on all participants' spheres of activity -- including those of the teachers.

Force and threat of force were now employed by the teachers. They took a different approach than the parents and administration had: they selected rule enforcement as their primary method of coercion. In a short time this changed the configuration of relationships within the school and between the school and community to a "conflict bureaucracy." Specifically, the conflict was now over rules designed to limit the power of the administration and the parents, and thus increase the power of the teachers. With this shift in power the arbitrariness of the preceding months was diminished: the administrative apparatus was becoming bureaucratic, based on rules governing the behavior of all members of the organization -- parents, the administration and teachers. Compared with the force and force threat period, the conflict bureaucracy was highly stable; even the extent of the conflict and the punishment of Brown by the teachers was regulated by rules -- for example, the procedure for filing a grievance. But the bureaucratization of the school was an unintended consequence of the teachers' attempt to improve their situation, by finding a mechanism for increasing their professional autonomy.72)

In addition to increasing the teachers' distance from the community and controlling Brown's behavior, the establishment of the conflict bureaucracy protected the teachers from ineptness (Goode, 1967). Instead of feeling the weight of the consequences of Brown's mismanagement or the inept classroom performances of their colleagues, the teachers were insulated by the bureaucratic procedures' prescription of standardized complaint procedures. Similarly, the inept were protected -- since they too

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72) Collins (1975, p. 320) recognizes the process of bureaucratization presented above as a principle of organizational behavior. He writes: "The greater the pressure to disperse control equally and prevent personal long-term appropriation of authority, the greater the emphasis on bureaucratization."

were covered by the same rules that stressed uniform, systematic treatment instead of the capricious "scapegoating" tactics of the administration during the reorganization of BJW and NBC.

D. Community and Board Reactions

1. Reports to the Board of Education

That evening, at a Board of Education meeting, the smallest audience in several months listened to Ellis summarize the content of a report he had submitted to the Board of Education on the current state of Lincoln Acres school. In addition, Astrid Little and Harriet Stein presented written accounts of their consulting efforts in the school. A detailed curriculum and schedule for the BJW team was also part of their report.

In general, although there was still some suspicion among Board members and parents, the changes in the school were viewed as favorable. In fact, it was suggested that other schools in the district be required to formulate curriculum guides as detailed as the one produced by BJW, and that other schools be evaluated as carefully as Lincoln Acres had been. The only negative consequence of the reorganization was pointed out by Biddle:

> Some of the things and excitement of a new school are gone. There are good teachers there. Some of them now have bad vibrations.

(2. Commentary)

In its second-page headline that week, the Washingtonville Courier announced: "Acres School Dispute Ends Quietly." Indeed, after considerable conflict, it had. The reorganization of the NBC and BJW teams, the certification of the programs through intervention by Little and Stein, and the construction of a written curriculum all restored a sense of confidence in parents that the school not only had attempted to change, but actually succeeded. Finally, the installation of walls served as a conflict resolution symbol. At the same time, however, the walls were a further concrete confirmation that the community complaints had not been unfounded; after a struggle, the school now fit the parents' image of education, not the educators. Of course, as we have already begun to see, though the conflict between the school and community was resolved for the most part, its legacy was conflict within the school.

2. Conservative Board candidates emerge

But even after its resolution, the school-community conflict was to have a lasting effect on the educational policies of the township. In early January, Anthony Bonomi, Rob Goldman, and Estelle Hunter, all Lincoln Acres residents and vocal critics of the Lincoln Acres school, announced their candidacy for the three vacant seats in the yearly Board of Education election. Bonomi and Goldman were sponsored by Sylvia Peabody, an incumbent Board member and resident of Lincoln Acres. Although they publicly denied it, their intention if elected was to form a conservative, anti-innovation coalition on the Board.

E. Improvement and Planning Efforts

1. Planning for next year begins

The faculty spent the morning of January 16 on the construction of report cards; the custodians were shampooing the carpet in the BB instructional area.

At 11:30, the entire faculty attended a voluntary meeting of the committee to propose reorganization plans for the following year. Ellis explained the purpose of the committee by saying:

> This is an advisory committee that will come up with recommendations for next year. There will [also] be a committee of parents that I will meet with. At some point I hope the two committees will meet. With that preface I don't want to do anything more but be a notetaker and clarifier.

Among the topics discussed during this fairly friendly and relaxed meeting were the anticipated enrollment, the possibility of self-contained classrooms, whether there would be team teaching, student placement procedures, and the role of parents in the reorganization. At one point in the meeting, Ellis polled the teachers for their preference for the following year: a few wanted to have self-contained classrooms, others wanted slight modifications from the current arrangements and one team, BJW wanted to remain intact.

In Ellis' view, the parents would be satisfied with an arrangement that provided alternative teaching strategies; none would insist on all self-contained classrooms. When asked who would choose the parents to participate on the reorganization committee, Ellis' answer was:

> Not me. I'm not so politically naive. I talked to the PTA steering committee last night and told them that I didn't want to be responsible for the selection.

With this the meeting ended.

2. Faculty problem identification continues

At 1:20 p.m. the faculty re-gathered with Ellis in the teachers lounge to resume their march through the agenda items that remained from the last faculty meeting.

The first item, the role of the resource teacher, resulted in the following conversation, which captures the essential problems:

> Priscilla: Is his job administrative or evaluative?
>
> Ellis: By definition not either administrative or supervisory. The Board said that in the absence of the principal the resource teacher is an administrator and accountable. When the principal is present he is the only one accountable.
>
> Sam: I can be under administrative direction. I'm not an administrator but a vehicle for carrying out the administrative directive. That's very touchy, like walking on eggshells. I see myself working for two sets of people -- teachers and Ellis.
>
> Priscilla: Right now we see you working entirely for Ellis. Maybe you should do one or the other. We're uncomfortable with the situation.
>
> Sam: I am too. I'd like to hear what people would like me to do.

The conversation continued, with Sam repeatedly admitting that he did not know what his duties were. As he floundered, the teachers became increasingly critical of him until Ellis re-entered the discussion.

> Ellis: I want to find out what you're going to do on your own initiative.
>
> Sam: I need help with that.
>
> Ellis: I feel I told you things that should have been your initiative. I feel I can't go to a budget meeting and tell them I want a $13,000 helping teacher, not a resource teacher. When the entire school is in need of help and Jeanne says she doesn't have the time [to use Sam] -- that is something the school needs -- it probably needs the resource teacher most now. That's what I heard.

At this point, in reaction to Ellis' intensification of the attack on Sam, the teachers quickly defended Sam by pointing to the positive contributions he had made to the school. Several teachers challenged Ellis for his dim view of Sam's performance. Shortly afterward, however, several teachers claimed that their "trust" in Sam was so low that they didn't think he could perform useful services for them any more. Eventually, after the main arguments had been rehashed several times, the majority of the faculty lost interest and began talking among themselves.

The only outcome was that it was clear that all members of Sam's role-set, as well as Sam, were confused over what his responsibilities were. The vague outcome was a promise by Sam to improve the situation and take more initiative in the future.

The final portion of the meeting was devoted to a wide-ranging discussion of parents. The teachers agreed that the Board of Education, and to some extent Biddle, had acted inappropriately in responding directly to parent complaints, rather than referring them to teachers, who thus felt powerless. In this conversation -- for the first and only time during this or the preceding meeting -- Ellis adopted a self-reflective attitude. He told the teachers:

> I'll share a decision with you -- I made it selflessly, I think, but it's hard to tell. It was clear to me at one point that I could stonewall the whole thing -- not talk to the Board or Biddle or the parents, which I felt very certain would have put me as the object of a witch hunt, and they would have gotten me. As I say, it's hard to know if it was selfish or not -- at that point I was so shaken and numb it's hard to know. I could have been shut right out. I made that decision and I don't know honestly how I would do it again or how much more I'm willing to compromise for the stability of the school. I feel that in some ways Bob was protecting himself from being set up as a scapegoat -- I don't know for sure -- I didn't ask him. I hope this helps explain my actions.

The meeting ended without proposals for action aside from the already-proposed formulation of rules governing parent access. When Ellis announced that Sy Golden, the president of the PTA, would make a presentation at the next faculty meeting, some teachers asked if he would be a good person to explain the problems with parents to. Ellis' view was that it would be useful to discuss communication between parents and the school with Golden.

(3. Commentary)

Overall, the discussions that took place since school resumed after the vacation did raise the central issues, and gave the faculty an opportunity to confront Ellis and each other -- but usually did not result in new understandings, or agreement over actions to be taken to avoid school-community conflicts in the future. The need to develop procedures to regulate parent behavior was forced on a reluctant Ellis by the teachers. But there were no real plans for alleviating the tensions and conflicts within the faculty, or for clarifying administrative roles. Differences of viewpoint and assessment of past blame were perhaps rooted enough in underlying values that steps toward improvement were unlikely. For example, it became apparent that the role of the principal in teacher evaluation as Brown perceived it was not congruent with the subordinate participation model that the teachers desired. To change this in any way would have meant substantial redistribution in power of administrators and teachers, not something Brown welcomed. In addition, though the faculty had developed more solidarity and militancy, they had little experience so far in serious shared problem-solving efforts of the scale that serious corrective action would require: Ellis' actions inside and outside the school had increasingly pre-empted these functions until now, and the teachers had in effect acquiesced.

3. The PTA president talks with the teachers

At his request, Sy Golden, the recently elected president of the Lincoln Acres PTA, addressed the teachers at their regularly scheduled faculty meeting on January 19. His basic message was that the PTA wanted to develop more active participation in it by teachers. He asked for a teacher to join the executive board of the PTA, and invited teacher participation in fund raising and suggestions as to how the PTA could help raise teacher morale.

At various points, teachers asked pointedly hostile questions of Golden. When he asked for suggestions, few if any were offered. In general, the teachers viewed Golden as among those having caused them trouble and as continuing to threaten them. Accordingly, the teachers conveyed the clear message that they were not ready to cooperate with parents. In fact the atmosphere of the meeting was so antagonistic that soon after Golden strode out of the room Regina said: "I never saw such a hostile group in my life." As for Golden, he told the researcher, "They gave me the silent treatment -- I was really iced."

4. Attempts to improve communication

As we have seen, the working relationships between Brown and the teachers at this point were, at best, weak. In an attempt to improve the situation Brown wrote memos to several teachers. Below is an excerpt of a January 20, 1976 memo from Brown to the BJW team. It was a pathetic plea.

> I am rather concerned with meetings. We've had a lot of trouble getting together for almost a month now. I view the meetings we have as helpful... they help me, they help you. They are not primarily information-giving meetings because we can write back and forth [on] various things that keep our information stockpile up to date. In helping me get to a place where I can be more trustworthy and more helpful to you and helping you get to a place where I can work with you in a manner that is more pleasant for both of us, I think we need some meetings. I will leave it only at that, because if we are not mutually committed to the need

> for the purpose of meetings, we're just going to be wasting each other's time. Please contact me, set up meetings individually or as a team to work on these issues or any other issues. I really want us to get a lot more together than we are now.

The difficulty in communication was partly due to Brown's increasing lack of interest in the affairs of the school; and substantially the result of the distrust in him that the teachers had developed. This portion of the memo also shows how far the administration and operation of the school had developed into a conflict bureaucracy by January: it illustrates the need to rely on written communications rather than face-to-face contact.

5. The WEA meets

In the middle of one of Brown's periodic trips to New England (this one began on Friday and ended the following Tuesday), the WEA chapter of Lincoln Acres school held a meeting to review various issues.

Dori announced that on Friday a formal written grievance had been presented to Ellis, and that as specified in the union contract he had three days to reply to it. She also announced that the WEA communications workshop for improving Koffeeklatching skills would be held at Regina Hanley's that Thursday after school.

Another topic discussed in the meeting was the possibility of having a faculty member attend all executive PTA meetings to insure that the teachers' viewpoint was not distorted. This idea was acceptable, but no one volunteered to attend. There were also complaints that Brown had "dragged his feet" on sending out rules regarding parent access to the school, and that he still didn't have a sign on the front door directing visitors to the front office.

There was some dissatisfaction directed at the lack of participation by "three or four faculty members" in WEA meetings and other activities; Alan was the only one explicitly named. This was the first indication that the faculty was less than fully united against Brown and that factions might be forming within the teachers' ranks.

6. Rules for school-community contact

The students of Lincoln Acres school carried home three letters to their parents on January 26, 1976. The first one explained the school reorganization committee and asked for volunteers. Beside specifying that the committee would be advisory, the letter clearly noted that Sy Golden would screen the applicants and make the final selections.

The second letter from Ellis presented a clarification of the communication procedure between parents and teachers. It read in part:

> Whenever a question or problem comes to your attention, please take it personally to the teacher closest to the situation. If you are unable to solve the problem with that teacher, please make arrangements to meet with me. I prefer to meet with you and the teacher together, but I can arrange individual meetings where appropriate. Only after we have made these attempts to help you, should you resort to communication with the Superintendent, Board of Education, or others.

The third letter specified the rules for parent visitation to the school. The key paragraph read:

> All visits should be arranged in advance with the teacher(s) whose class you wish to visit. Visitors report to the office upon entering the building. While visiting a classroom, do not talk to the teacher beyond introducing yourself. The teacher is teaching at that time. Contact him/her away from the children to arrange a conference. A visit is not a conference. Before leaving the building, check back in the office. The secretary may ask you to complete one of our feedback questionnaires.

These procedures, which had been demanded by the teachers, had been reluctantly formulated (and similarly would be enforced) by Brown.

7. A faculty meeting

The next faculty meeting was held on January 29 during lunch hour. A series of routine announcements began the meeting: a guest speaker on developmental gym who would talk to parents, field trip arrangements, problems with children running in the school, and so on.

Ellis then announced that a new sign-in sheet for parent visitors and volunteers would be in use beginning Monday. He emphasized:

> With the sign-in procedure we have to be careful. The first teacher who screws up will break the dam for the rest.

This led Dori to ask about the posting of a sign to direct visitors to the office. Ellis answered that it would be put up soon. He then turned the meeting over to Dori who explained that the teachers had decided to have rotating pairs of teachers, determined alphabetically, attend PTA meetings. This announcement raised the issue of teacher participation in teacher-sponsored activities, and there was goading of those teachers who were notably absent from meetings. Dori concluded by asking Ellis if the agenda items for faculty meetings could be posted on a bulletin board designated for the exclusive use of the teachers. This led Ellis into the following speech.

> O.K. We'll rearrange the office. You'll get a board. O.K., the next item I have is about trust that I am surprised about. Teachers at this school have related to the community the details of our discussions at our reorganization meeting. This individual or individuals violated the process also by asking parents to solicit requests now for various teachers [for their children next fall]. This is pretty lousy stuff, folks. We can't work unless there is trust in these meetings. I wouldn't bring this up if I wasn't absolutely certain. I can't help you with that.

These comments brought gasps of surprise from several teachers. As with his admonition quoted above on the parent sign-in process, Ellis tried to shift some of the onus for the problems of the school onto the teachers. But, on balance, the atmosphere of this meeting was much more relaxed than that of those immediately preceding it. It appeared that both Brown and the teachers had resigned themselves to the fact that mutual trust between them would not be restored. Later in the day, when the researcher asked Brown how everything had been recently, he answered: "All right. I've been cast in two shows, but haven't heard from the director yet."

> Researcher: I mean school life.
>
> Brown: O.K. But you can only take away so much of a man's motivation until he looks to other areas of his life.

The teachers' current attitudes were exemplified in the BJW team's plan to follow the schedule Sam had devised for them, to continue to write lesson plans, but on their own to gradually return to team teaching and the use of open space. In other words, they decided that the wisest course was to conform to the superficial parts ot the administrative reorganization, and to ignore those aspects that did not meet their needs. It was perhaps consistent with this plan that they did not consider Ellis' offer of help in the memo on "meetings" quoted above.

8. Learning to Koffeeklatch effectively

Later that afternoon, about half of the Lincoln Acres faculty attended the verbal communications skills training session at Regina Hanley's house in Allwood Green. A representative of the state education association led the group through a series of exercises designed to increase their ability to present a viewpoint convincingly to a group of parents. The teachers paid rapt attention to the presentation and seemed seriously committed to improving their communicative abilities. Most wanted to use these skills to defend themselves to the community if necessary.

9 . The grievance continues

Toward the end of the week, Ellis replied to the formal grievance in a four-page letter in which he claimed that it was not a school-wide grievance, and that he could ignore it because the proper procedures had not been followed. The teachers were surprised that he issued a rebuttal; they initiated the second stage of the grievance procedure, by sending a copy of the complaint to the superintendent of schools.

10. The weekly faculty meeting

At the regularly scheduled lunch-time faculty meeting, Dori reported on the PTA meeting that she had been assigned to attend the previous night. Basically, Sy Golden was still looking for ways to bring parents and teachers together; he suggested a wine and cheese party. The teachers' mood was now more conciliatory, but they took no clear steps toward improving relations with the PTA.

Next, the meeting focused on the school reorganization. It was suggested that Biddle be invited to talk with the teachers about the reorganization and the effect of possible sharp reductions of the school budget on educational programs. Ellis agreed to make arrangements for this meeting.

The other important announcement was that Ellis had fired a custodian who had been with the school since it opened. Only one teacher commented publicly at the meeting that she thought he was a good custodian and would be missed. Others remarked privately that the firing of the custodian was a scapegoating act similar to the firing of Katie Neustadt.

Again, although there was an underlying tension, the tone of the meeting was more or less business as usual. There was no discussion of the major issues that had been raised and left unresolved at earlier meetings.

11. Sally resigns

A week after being evaluated for the second time since school opened, Sally decided to resign as a teacher in the Lincoln Acres school effective June, 1976. Her reasoning was that Ellis was not going to recommend her for rehiring and that by resigning she could bargain with him for a good recommendation to future employers and also collect unemployment benefits. As it developed, Ellis agreed to write a favorable evaluation of her in return for her resignation. Needless to say, at this point, Sally did not wish Ellis well; she hoped that he would be fired by the end of the year, too.

12. Ellis' report

In his mandated monthly report to the Board of Education Brown discussed recent events such as Golden's visit to the school and work on math objectives. He also wrote:

> I worked with the staff in problem-solving within the building. During periods of crisis, certain policies and roles became strained. We have now begun to reaffirm appropriate policies and roles for Lincoln Acres school internally and externally. Some of these discussions have resulted in communication with parents. Communication with parents has covered areas such as school visits, parent/teacher conferences, process for handling parent concerns and solicitation of parent feedback on our report card.

F. School Operations as of Mid-February

1. The state of the school

From several sustained observations of the school, it appeared that by mid-February classroom activities had stabilized. The addition of walls to various classrooms created a more "controlled" sense, as did the separation of the NBC team into three classes. There was also a detectable reduction in most teachers' energy level; they were clearly not as active as during the first months of the school; many simply wanted the year to end, and others, as we have seen, were planning on leaving at the end of the year. Despite this drop in energy (and generally in morale) teachers appeared to continue delivering well-planned instruction to their students. As for the students, although it is clear they did not pass through the conflict unaffected, (as we have noted, several were upset by the firing of a teacher, and the end of open space) they seemed to adjust to new circumstances more easily than the teachers did.

Beyond the more subdued tone of the school, the most significant recent change was that of institutionalization of procedures. On a typical day, the bulletin board in the office had a sheet for teachers to put agenda items on, minutes of all faculty and PTA meetings, a letter from the PTA president either praising teachers for their efforts or cordially inviting them to participate in a PTA event, a parent visitation form filled in with positive comments and a draft of a letter written by Ellis to the Board of Education or other group (posted so that teachers could offer revisions and approve it). A few parents that might be in the building had had to sign in, and were wearing name tags.

2. Reorganization plans continue

Twelve parents and Brown met in the second week of February to begin work on the reorganization of the school for the following year. Brown clearly informed the parents that their role was advisory and that final decisions were to be made by himself. The task set for this meeting was the generation of a list of topics for discussion at future meetings. The resulting topics were: number of students in a class, use of playground, physical structure of the interior of the school, the use of self-contained and team teaching approaches, criteria for grouping, and report cards.

At approximately the same time, the teachers and Ellis held their second reorganization meeting. A basic question raised was the degree of influence the teachers would actually have in the planning.

> Jeanne: I don't feel like sitting here and doing this if you have the final decision and we don't know where you're coming from.
>
> Ellis: I don't know yet. I haven't made any decisions. I have no hidden agenda and am not trying to coopt anybody. The groundwork for this school was never done previous to my coming. We have had to live with that. I found that we need more alternatives in the school. We should have a variety of options for parents who want them for various reasons.
>
> Wanda: What happens if we get a situation like last summer with the survey? If we ask for input and don't listen to it, won't we have trouble?
>
> Ellis: I have every right to refuse it and yours as well.
>
> Wanda: But that happened this summer with the survey.
>
> Ellis: That was the Board's survey. I have to act. You can make the decision whether to participate or not but I will make some decisions anyway without your input. We can't operate on the basis of knowing that 66% support something, nor can we afford to be philosophical.

The substance of the planning was not much different than that of the previous meeting: teachers were still trying to decide whether they wanted to team teach or use self-contained classrooms, and whether to have two or three age levels of children in a class. It was evident, however, that the trend was toward less innovative arrangements than they had begun the year with; at least two teachers (Dori and Jeanne) were already firmly requesting self-contained classrooms and only two others (Wanda and Alice) were certain that they wanted to form a team. (As it turned out, commitments to team teaching for the coming year were to shift several times before the end of the year.)

The teachers also asked Ellis what was happening in the parent reorganization meeting. Brown said that he thought there would be no problems with parents and that he hoped to have them discuss "philosophical" questions such as the benefits of having first and second grade children in the same classroom.

G. Summary of Events in the School: February through mid-April

The pattern of social relationships within the school that had developed by February -- conflict bureaucracy -- fluctuated in intensity during the next months, but hostility between Brown and the teachers never diminished enough to permit constructive steps toward collaboration. In the following pages the events that sustained the conflict will be summarized.

1. The grievance

A new, more experienced custodian was hired, and by late February the building was noticeably cleaner. In early March, Biddle wrote to the WEA informing them that from his point of view the grievance had ended; the major problem was the former custodian and the unsanitary conditions were now corrected. After a faculty meeting on March 8 the teachers once again discussed the grievance, with most of them finding the improvements acceptable. They voted to discontinue it. They also decided, however, to keep logs of the conditions in teaching areas in the event that they needed documentary support for another grievance.

2. The structure of faculty meetings

The most significant change in faculty meetings was that teachers controlled the flow of discussion by building the agenda around their concerns. Brown still acted as the chairman of the meetings and managed them, but not with as much ease as earlier in the year: joking, silence and frequently blunt remarks kept Brown from totally dominating the proceedings as he had previously. The teachers also physically isolated Brown; he often found himself the only one sitting on one of the several sofas that lined the walls of the teachers' lounge. In addition, minutes were meticulously kept by the teachers and posted after every meeting.

The content of the meetings was far-ranging. A single meeting could contain reports from Ellis concerning the behavior of students in bathrooms, strategy planning of relationships with the PTA, work on reading objectives, and planning for the following year.

Brown repeatedly told the researcher privately that he had lost interest in running the school and was actively seeking other employment. But when he presented himself to the faculty, in spite of occasional hints that he might leave the school, he behaved as though he were still in control of things and intended to remain for the next two years of his contract. For example, he retained power by either firing or threatening to fire teachers, and he guided the reorganization for the following year in such a way as to maximize his role.

3. Social relations in the school

Underlying all interaction between the teachers and Brown was a sense of tension. Though both sides regarded trust as desirable, it was absent, and given the magnitude of the conflict, not likely to increase. The teachers' approach to the situation was to contain Brown's power; they did little to try to restore the collegial relationship of the early days. In fact, the teachers not only enforced rules and regulations throughout the school, but also met secretly, excluding Brown. In many respects, the conflict became independent of either the actions of Brown or the teachers; after the teachers acknowledged that he had corrected the custodial situation, they found other deficiencies. Eventually several teachers developed a deep dislike of Brown, not only as an administrator but as a person.

In March Brown asked the teachers to provide him with feedback on various aspects of his job performance. The form containing the questions emphasized that the replies were optional and anonymous. A sample of the questions asked follows.

1. On what tasks do you see me spending the most time or effort?

2. On what tasks do you feel I spend too much or unwarranted time or effort?

3. What tasks of the principal are most important in your opinion?

4. What tasks do you feel I do best?

5. What tasks do you feel I do worst?

6. In what ways would you most want me to change?

Brown used the information on these forms for his own purposes; he did not discuss issues raised by them with the faculty (or with the researcher), and told the researcher that the main function of this feedback was to provide an emotional outlet for the teachers.

Throughout the conflict, solidarity among the teachers was surprisingly high. Even after various teachers were chided by others for non-participation, the feeling that any one of them could become the object of attack by the administration or parents pulled them tightly together. Indeed, it was the perception that "we are all in this boat together" that united the teachers and kept them from collaboration with Brown. Brown was not among the "we".

4. Classroom activities

Instructional activities did not change much from the time of the NBC and BJW reorganization until the end of the year. The basic differences from the beginning of the year were that more attention was paid to formal reading instruction, the organization of instruction was less open, and little if any team teaching existed. Through the use of lesson plans and observation, the administration monitored instructional activities more closely. For example, Astrid Little periodically evaluated, worked with and instructed some teachers, primarily Sally and the BJW team. Part of Little's responsibility was to report on her interventions to Biddle. Here is a paragraph from her April 15, 1976 report.

> In summary, my observations this week indicate that a well-planned and comprehensive reading/language program is in progress in the BJW pod. The children are receiving instruction in all aspects of reading/language development, they are assuming responsibility for reading independently, they are writing and learning the skills of writing, and most importantly -- they seem to be enjoying the whole process.

This type of evaluation, coupled with the addition of walls and the changes noted above, served to substantially reduce parents' fears and complaints about what was being taught in the school.

Little's efforts were not appreciated by the teachers, however. In a meeting in April she tried to explain the source of her involvement in the Lincoln Acres school and what she was actually doing. In sharply-worded comments, the teachers accused her of being a secret evaluator and of influencing personnel policies. Little failed to convince them that she was, in her words, an "objective observer" of activities in the school and after enduring a mixture of hostility and silence she left the meeting rapidly. The teachers had treated Little as they had Golden when he attempted rapprochement earlier in the year.

5. Achievement measures

In the spring the results of the state assessment tests and the California Achievement tests were released for the Washingtonville school district. On both tests Lincoln Acres students scored higher than those in any elementary school in the district on reading. In mathematics Lincoln Acres students ranked highest in the district on the California Achievement test and were a close second to Fernwood school on the state assessment tests. The schools that ranked lowest on both tests were the rural schools, which had students with the lowest socioeconomic background. Lincoln Acres, which had the highest socioeconomic student body in the township, ranked highest. It seems reasonable to assume, then, that the well-established influence of socioeconomic background on academic achievement was a factor; these test scores may have been produced independently of anything that occurred in Lincoln Acres school. On the positive side, we should note that the conflict, reorganization and defects in the educational program did not appear to have reduced the academic achievement of Lincoln Acres students.

H. Summary of School-Community Relations: February through Mid-April

1. Parent control

Although there were periodic problems with parents' arriving to observe a teacher unannounced, the problem of parental access to the school was generally solved by enforcing sign-in procedures and other rules. After a long delay, a sign was posted on the main entrance that read:

> All visitors MUST report to the principal's office
> upon entering the building.

The only major problem was that a parent had called Bert and complained bitterly about personal qualities that she disapproved of in his teammate, Glenda. The parent also complained to Brown, with the result that her child was transferred from Glenda's to Bert's class. This apparent lack of support from the administration prompted Glenda to submit a request for a transfer to another school the following year. The incident reminded the teachers of earlier problems and put them on alert to try to avoid further parental interference. As it turned out, in late March Biddle fired Glenda effective that June, on the grounds that she was unable to communicate effectively with parents.

2. Relations with the PTA

Tensions between the teachers and community, although they were sharply reduced since the reorganization of the NBC and BJW teams, remained below the surface of all PTA activities. Eventually, there was an open conflict between the executive leadership of the PTA and the teachers.

Representatives of the faculty attended each PTA executive committee meeting and reported on the proceedings to the rest of the faculty. At this time, the main interest of the PTA was fund raising. Although this type of activity was of peripheral interest to the teachers, they did cooperate in most fund raising ventures. But when it came time to spend the money, although the PTA asked for suggestions from the faculty, they set their own priorities and ignored the teachers' advice.

The conflict between the teachers and the PTA crystallized over Golden's plans for the school atrium. As in proceeding instances, the teachers were not consulted on a project that directly affected them and the expenditure of money they had helped raise. Brown became involved in this issue when he told the PTA executive committee that teachers really didn't care what went into the atrium. His comment was reported to the teachers by their representative and created another confrontation between the faculty and Brown. In a letter sent to Golden the teachers stated that they had never seen the final plans for the atrium. It continued:

> It is without a doubt that every member of our staff was embarrassed, bewildered and angered by Mr. Brown's remark at the meeting of April 6 -- "Not one staff member came to the office to look at the plans -- that says something about staff involvement."
>
> We strongly feel that we must have the right of final approval for any plans affecting the landscaping of our school.

This incident incensed some teachers to the point that they considered contacting Biddle to ask him to outline the procedures necessary to have a principal fired.

Before long, the difficulties with the PTA were reduced with the election of Sandra Waters to the presidency. She had supported the teachers throughout most of the year. However, until almost the end of the year there was a struggle between the teachers and the PTA executive committee for control of a variety of activities within the school.

3. Reorganization plans

Two more parent reorganization meetings were led by Sam. Almost all aspects of the school were discussed; for the following year most parents wanted to see a variety of teaching styles for each grade level. They also wanted to find ways to improve relations between the school and community, and better ways for learning about student progress.

In parallel, the teachers continued to discuss their preferences for the following year. Because of possible transfers, resignations, the addition of new faculty members, uncertainty over enrollments and problems caused by a delay in the state budget, little was accomplished in the way of concrete plans. It was clear, however, that the teachers were not intent on either team teaching or open space, but on moving toward some combination of open space, two-person teams, two-grade-level classes and, in increasing numbers, self-contained classrooms.

On March 25, in a tense, highly formal meeting, the parent reorganization committee and the teachers discussed the plans for the following year. Because of Ellis' tight control of the meeting, there was little real discussion of the issues, so it appeared that the teachers and parents were in essential agreement. Both groups did want "alternative" learning environments (that is, the presence of more traditional teaching patterns along with the innovations tried this year), and better relations between parents and teachers. But several teachers were annoyed with Ellis' apparent attempt to gloss over problems and use the occasion to present a non-existent unity of purpose between teachers and parents.

4. The Board of Education election

In contrast with previous Board of Education elections, this year's had several issues: the most pre-eminent one was the Brunswick Acres crisis. All five of the candidates (there were three seats open) attacked Biddle for his handling of the situation; Goldman and Bonomi -- two of the four Lincoln Acres residents running -- hinted strongly that they would work for Biddle's removal once they were elected.

As noted above, Sylvia Peabody, an incumbent Board member, sponsored Goldman's and Bonomi's campaigns, and intended to form a conservative coalition on the Board. Despite public protest over this and the fact that if they were elected four members of the nine-person Board would be from Lincoln Acres, Bonomi and Goldman were elected by the highest plurality. The other position was retained by Grace Walters, a liberal. Lincoln Acres was now represented by four "conservatives" on the Board of Education: Frisch, Peabody, Goldman and Bonomi. Hassfelt, a Lincoln Acres liberal, may have lost his seat because of his refusal to comment critically on Biddle's overall performance as superintendent of schools.*

5. Problems at Oxford school

In late winter and early spring, a group of Allwood Green residents scrutinized the open space instruction at Allwood Green school. They charged that many of the same deficiencies that had existed in Lincoln Acres were also present in Oxford,especially in the fifth and sixth grade classes. After several meetings, the conflict was resolved with the reorganization of part of the open space program, and the familiar promise that the school would contain more "alternative" types of education the following year.

To a large extent, the examination of open space in other schools in the district was influenced by the events at Lincoln Acres. Open space education had been an uncontroversial part of Oxford school for almost four years before Lincoln Acres opened.

6. Attempts to oust Biddle

During the spring, there was another attempt (one of several in recent years) to have Biddle removed as superintendent of schools. It was organized by Charles Minetta, and most of its supporters were residents of the rural areas. Among the usual complaints were defects in the high school work-study program, the lack of curriculum in the district, Biddle's poor administration and declining SAT scores. Added to these were the "experimentation" in Lincoln Acres school, and the inefficient handling of problems that arose from it.

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* Biddle does not agree with this view, and cited deficiencies in Hassfelt's performance which led to his not being re-elected.

After several heated Board meetings at which Biddle was charged with ineptitude, on June 7th a petition calling for his removal, containing 1,100 signatures, was delivered to the Board. On July 1, the Board announced that it could not consider the petition since Biddle could not be removed legally until the expiration of his contract.

7. State school funding crisis

In February, as plans were being made for the following year, it became apparent that the state legislature was having difficulty formulating and passing a state aid formula for public education. Even if the problems were quickly resolved, because of technicalities in the formula, Washingtonville was likely to suffer a substantial reduction in its budget. This, of course, had a considerable effect on planning. For example, one option that the Board of Education discussed was closing one of the district's elementary schools.

Biddle visited the Lincoln Acres faculty to explain the funding problems and their possible implications for the district and the school. In his talk with the teachers, he connected the monetary difficulties with the larger social trends and the problems that had faced the school earlier in the year. He said:

> The state situation is 50 teachers per 1,000 students, and Washingtonville is 73 per 1,000, which is the source of Washingtonville per pupil expenditures being two to three hundred dollars above most districts in the state. If people equate education with the basic skills you can have 40 per 1,000 and do a good job. It isn't [just] Washingtonville but the whole cotton-pickin' nation that's going back to basic skills -- every time a depression hits. You talk about wanting to humanize education -- it's going the other way. I wish I knew what basic skills were. I know that to some people it is equivalent to reading, writing and arithmetic. I know they're important.

The basic impact of the funding crisis on Lincoln Acres -- as in many districts around the state -- was to add another element of uncertainty and confusion to planning for the following year.

I. The Principal's Resignation and Succession

1. Brown resigns

On April 12, 1976, Ellis Brown told the faculty of his resignation. With characteristic understatement, he replied to a question from Dori asking if he might be leaving the school:

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> It is extremely likely that I'll get a number of jobs that are attractive and I'm well qualified. I have to admit that I'm not sure what I want to do. I'm not happy with education in America and I'm not willing to take grief as a change agent. I think a change is in order for my own personal well being.

While several teachers were shocked by this announcement, others said that they had been expecting Ellis to leave; they sensed that he had been under severe strain in recent weeks.

In an interview with the researcher shortly after he announced his resignation, Brown reflected further on his experiences in Washingtonville.

> Researcher: How would you summarize where the school is now?
>
> Brown: I think the organizational format of the school on the micro level -- how each classroom is organized and conducted -- is close to what the parents can identify with. I believe in that -- I believe parents should have what they can accept and value. My function is only to lead them in a direction in which they are ready or interested in going, or to persuade them to do things that they can be persuaded to do. So we got into rather a conventional situation that doesn't interest me.
>
> Researcher: How is that in educational terms?
>
> Brown: Conventional. The kids are getting a tremendous amount of input in the cognitive domain, and there is systematic erosion of the psycho-motor and affective domain instruction.
>
> Researcher: You don't see that as something that will change here?
>
> Brown: I'm not that kind of a change agent. I'm not a revolutionary. I'm not an incendiary. I'm a practitioner. I know how to change. I know how to run good, creative programs, I think. But I don't do the PR for that kind of thing. I don't do the ground work: I'm not really a parent educator. I feel a little uncomfortable saying that, because parent relationships are important, but I'm not in the business of taking a parent from point A to point B in their awareness of children. I try to be responsive when the parent has a need, and I can either easily point that need out or they can find it themselves and initiate some self-

> education, but for people who think they know how to parent children, who do not have my interest and my values in children, we should just separate them.

Concerning his relationship with Biddle, Brown said:

> Oh, bizarre. The man is falling apart.
>
> Researcher: Why is that?
>
> Brown: He's been under the same pressure I have, except magnified and for a longer number of years.
>
> Researcher: District-wide?
>
> Brown: Well, it's not district-wide, it's worst here. But there's not a compensatory area of support for him in the district. Everybody's got something to bitch at him for, throughout the district, and that's what's wrong.
>
> Researcher: How has that affected how you've been able to operate?
>
> Brown: He's been inconsistent, non-supportive, emotional, impulsive. I have no administrative support in this position at all. Zero.*

2. Later events

A few weeks later Brown told the faculty that he would become the principal of a three-year-old open space elementary school on Cape Cod. He was to return to rural New England.

In early May, as a result of difficulties the state had in funding schools to meet constitutional requirements, the Board of Education "fired" all non-tenured teachers. This created additional uncertainty for the future of Lincoln Acres school, since over half of the teachers were non-tenured. It also created an atmosphere of crisis throughout the school district, because neighboring communities were affected in the same way by the funding problems but had found other solutions. Eventually, the teachers were rehired, but the funding problem was not solved.

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* Biddle's response to this characterization is unprintable. He also noted:

> Ellis was supported far beyond anything reported [in the case] or by Ellis. Many, many conversations and planning sessions are not known to [the researcher].

In early June, the teachers met with Biddle to discuss problems in the school. Chief among them was finding a suitable replacement for Brown for the following year. Biddle said that the faculty could draft a letter outlining the qualifications the next principal should have. Shortly after, with guidance from Ellis (relationships between him and the teachers turned somewhat less abrasive once he announced his resignation) they formulated a set of criteria for the next principal. Several of these meetings were restricted to teachers alone. In these meetings, it was their opinion that both Astrid Little and Sam Pennington were probably candidates for the position. They strongly disliked Little (at one time several teachers had considered filing a grievance against her presence in the school) and though they were personally friendly with Sam, most disapproved of his performance in the school. Others found him unacceptable as a principal because they did not consider him strong enough to deal with parents. By June they had submitted a letter with their recommendations for the qualities a principal should have, chief among them the ability to handle parents.

3. Succession

On June 8, at the regular Board of Education meeting, Biddle asked that Alberta Bard be named acting principal of Lincoln Acres school, immediately replacing Ellis Brown. The appointment was approved and the next day Alberta Bard, an administrator at the Washingtonville junior high school and resident of Allwood Green, became acting principal of Lincoln Acres school. Although the teachers' input into the principal selection process had been limited, after some initial surprise they were extremely pleased with the new appointment. Mrs. Bard, a matter-of-fact, warm, person who exuded competence, also seemed to have the confidence of the parents who knew her.73)

The year ended with several meetings organized by Alberta (as she was soon called) to discuss reorganization for the following year. Several teachers insisted on a self-contained classroom, and others wanted some form of self-contained space with the option of team teaching. Only two teachers, Alice and Wanda, wanted to team teach at this point. Additionally, space had to be reallocated because of enrollment increases; this created more need for self-contained classrooms.

But with the exception of the two teachers who had been fired, the one voluntary transfer and the one who had resigned, all other teachers planned to return to Lincoln Acres the following year.

Alberta's impressions of the school and what she would like to accomplish during the next year were beginning to form after two weeks in her new position. In an interview, she said:

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73) The reader may remember that Bard was the runner-up in the advisory committee's initial recommendations to Biddle before the school opened.

> I think the community perhaps sees the Lincoln Acres teachers as not wanting to teach basic skills. Therefore, if they are going to teach basic skills, they are going to have to be made to. And they would see that as my job. Well, I think the teachers are very willing to teach basic skills at this point. And I think they will find really great relief in not having to deal with the question of how you create really meaningful education. The original intent of this group of teachers was to do something better than they'd ever done in their previous schools, to create a unique, really meaningful situation. Well, in a way, I'm saying, and I think it makes sense, we'll back off from that just a little bit. Let's get our feet firmly on the ground and get the community convinced that we can do a good job with a traditional kind of education -- and then we'll be able to move into really improving it and coming up with something that's a bit better.

J. The State of the School and Community at the End of the First Year

The second half of the first year was as complex as the first half. Since commentary has been provided frequently throughout this chapter, this section will focus on the relations between the school and community in the period after the resolution of the conflict and the social relations within the school.

The second parent questionnaire was given in June. When asked retrospectively how good a job the school had been doing at educating their children, 56% said it was doing an "outstanding," "very good," or "good" job by Easter. If we recall that 75% had rated it this way in February, it seems possible that satisfaction with the changes that took place after the reorganization declined once the new program became familiar to parents. However, 70% of the parents gave equivalently high ratings to the school as of the end of the year. Most significantly, in response to the question: What kind of job do you think Lincoln Acres School is doing now compared with the beginning of the year? 75% of the parents answered that it was: "much better", or "better". Only 18% of the parents thought the quality of education had remained the same and 7% thought that it was "worse" than at the beginning of the year. In other words, with the exception of a drop in the level of satisfaction during the spring, by the end of the year as many parents were satisfied (almost three quarters) with the performance of the school as at any time during the year. In addition, a change for the better in the school was widely perceived.

Undoubtedly, one factor affecting the increased level of parental satisfaction with the school by the end of the year was that the most dissatisfied parents had either transferred their children to another school or to another class within Lincoln Acres. Mildly dissatisfied parents also had most of the defects that they had observed in the school corrected. As we have seen, the conflict that remained after the school reorganization was between a few members of the PTA executive committee and the teachers. The nature of this conflict was different than the ones that proceeded it; the effectiveness of teacher classroom techniques was not questioned. This reduced conflict was over the ability of the teachers to maintain and extend their control of the school by deciding spending priorities.

As we have seen, relations within the faculty also changed after the school reorganization. Basically, the teachers united against the administration with the result that the daily operation of the school became stabilized through the installation of bureaucratic procedures. At the same time, the teachers created boundaries between themselves and the parents. We have labeled this period a "conflict bureaucracy."

In sum, from the formation of the faculty in February, 1975 to June, 1976, there had been a progression from a professional (collegial) organization to one characterized by force and force threat, and finally, to a conflict bureaucracy. The social relationships, and with them, the social structure of the school -- including the distribution and grouping of students -- were completely changed by the end of the first year of operation.

K. The Summer

Teachers did not work in the school during the summer. Sam volunteered time to help Alberta organize the school for September; this included hiring five new teachers, allocating teaching space, moving several walls, and cleaning the school. Late in the summer, after a search that the Board of Education took an active role in, Alberta Bard was appointed principal of the school.

It should be noted that during the summer the state school funding crisis reached a level which resulted in the court-ordered closing of all schools in the state for several weeks. The effect of this was general disruption, like that in the spring when the teachers were "fired." For the Lincoln Acres school, it meant that planning for the second year was further delayed.

L. Parting Shots

As he had been required to every month since the eruption of conflict in the school, Brown submitted a report to the Board of Education in June. This one he titled: "End-of- Year Report." He began with a long discussion of defects in the building's operation: problems with security, the heating system and shortages of storage space. Following this, a subsection titled "Programs" begins:

> The concern for "Basic Skills" instruction among Board of Education members and community members has been one of the most unfounded of all concerns over the new school. Nonetheless, since it has still not been put to rest, the accomplishments of the Lincoln Acres School staff in Basic Skills follow.

In a statement highly supportive of the teachers' efforts, Brown explains the rationale, assumptions and practice of the instructional program. He stresses the positive features of team teaching and open education. The following paragraph illustrates both his tone and the achievements that he considered the school to have accomplished.

> The output from the programming in Basic Skills as measured by state assessment tests and California Achievement Tests show that Board members and others who publicly stated periods of time up to half a year had been wasted at Lincoln Acres School were wrong.74) They were speaking without data then; they are strangely silent now that their wild speculations have been swept aside by a tide of data. A chance to regain some of the confidence of the Lincoln Acres staff and the Board awaits. The praise they have earned in this area should be made by the Board. The Board's current thrust of interest in the "Basics" requires praise for jobs well done in the area.

Brown then spends several paragraphs discussing the decision to build the school and the implicit understanding in the bond issue that it was to be a neighborhood school. In his opinion, Lincoln Acres should have been a magnet school with open enrollment throughout the district for those parents desiring open space and team teaching for their children. He continues:

> The viability of Lincoln Acres school as a neighborhood school depended upon the community's investment in and ownership of the open school concept of education. The Lincoln Acres community never evidenced any more positive attitude towards the design of the school than a dubious

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74) As noted above, Lincoln Acres children were of the highest socioeconomic level in the district, a fact which Brown chose not to mention.

> "wait-and-see." The selling of the concept was unsuccessful. Responding to community input in the design phase was not done on any significant scale.

In another subsection, "Information Given to the New Principal," Brown recounts the principal selection process, the Board of Education's apparent endorsement of his educational practices, and what he termed, "the string of errors preceding my entrance into the situation." For example:

> During the interview process, I was told that I would have to consider teachers within the district or township first, but that I would then be free to go outside the district for staff. After I started the interviewing of Washingtonville candidates, I was denied outside candidates. The current staff members are not a problem: I raise the issue as another example of incomplete information furnished to me and failure to keep promises made to attract me to the job.

Concerning the Board of Education, Brown writes:

> The Board of Education gave the staff at Lincoln Acres school no support. Insistence upon major changes in organizational format were required before one day's instruction had gone on. That is pre-judging people. The etymological step from "pre-judge" to prejudice is a short one. That is, I believe hidden prejudices existed on the Board of Education. They should have informed us of their prejudices. Then, at least, we would have understood the source of their lack of support.
>
> In response to the concerns of the community and the Board of Education, Lincoln Acres School has held two open houses and several meetings with Lincoln Acres parents and community members. Reports have been written for the superintendent and the Board of Education and much written material has been passed along to parents. While the content of the curriculum never had to be changed, since good education proceeded from the beginning at Lincoln Acres School, the style and appearance of the programming was changed to accommodate Board of Education and community mind-set about education.

The report ends with cautious optimism on the future of the school.

> A difficult year has passed at Lincoln Acres School, and an easier one can be expected next year. It is easier to be second than first. Also many of the problems inherited by the Lincoln Acres School administration and

> teachers have been alleviated somewhat. The extent to which the second year is easier than the first [will be] dependent in my view upon the response to items in this report. The response is not needed from the community of Lincoln Acres or the staff so much as the Board of Education. Parents, students and teachers have many questions in their minds this summer besides the looming specter of collapse at the state level:
>
> 1. Will the Board of Education make the Lincoln Acres School building livable, educationally flexible and safe?
>
> 2. Will the Board of Education give the Lincoln Acres children the same break other Washingtonville elementary children have for textbooks and supplies?
>
> 3. Will the Board of Education give credit where it is due for Lincoln Acres School successes and support for the development of a comprehensive modern educational program?

In this report, once again there is a denial that Brown was in any way responsible for the troubles that the school encountered. The only change in assigned responsibility for the problems is that the teachers are mildly praised and cast as unwitting victims. Another interesting aspect of the report is Brown's claim that the curriculum never was changed, but only formalized and presented differently to parents as a result of their pressure. From the researcher's perspective this appears to be true; the changes made in curriculum and organization were, for the most part, cosmetic.

This report accomplishes two other things. First, the teachers approved of it and thus felt more supportive of Brown on the eve of his departure. This probably served to reduce some of the anxiety that several of them experienced after he announced his resignation; they were afraid they had punished him too severely. Second, the report gave the teachers an opportunity to tell the Board of Education, Biddle and the parents what they thought of them without taking direct responsibility.

M. Looking Backward

1. Brown's reflections

In an interview with the researcher, Brown reflected on the events of the year. In his view, one of the major problems that the school faced was the socio-economic composition of the Lincoln Acres community. Thus, in his view, the complaints from the community:

> ...were directed at the non-conforming nature of the school. They were trying very hard to conform to a clear model of how you rise up from the city and make it to the suburbs. You really get concerned about discrepancies with the model, when the school is definitely a discrepancy from that model.
>
> Researcher: How, precisely?
>
> Brown: It's not lifting people up by the bootstraps and pushing them ahead with all kinds of arbitrary motivational devices to make them over-achieve and become CPA's. It really isn't.

On the behavior of teachers toward him, Brown made the following observations:

> I felt that I was misunderstood in some cases and not given a fair chance in some cases, but for the most part I felt that I was treated honestly. I don't have any real complaints. I haven't really described the feeling. I don't know just where I'm missing it. I like to think that I allowed myself to be a target when there needed to be a target. And I feel cheated that once in a while when I needed a target and I was foolish enough to let them be it, I sometimes was not given the same understanding that I felt I had for them. In simpler terms, maybe I forgot unpleasant things, flare-ups, anger, whatever. And I'm not sure they always did. Not in a general collective, but individuals I'm not sure always would forget something that I did under stress.

Finally, in response to a question focusing on what, if anything, he would have done differently during the year, Brown replied:

> It's hard to second-guess yourself, you know. I would obviously do many things differently the second time around, but that's just the benefit of experience. And I'm not prepared to say that I was unprepared for the job, that I was incompetent for the job. I could say, yes, at this point I could do this kind of job much better a second time. But I can also tell you I will never take this kind of job again.
>
> Researcher: This kind of job being specifically what?
>
> Brown: A community that's at odds with the district or the township and is working it out in a political process essentially, but in the area of education. I'm

> too far into education and too far away from politics to belong to that kind of thing. So maybe I was the wrong guy to bring in here. I don't know, but that's not my responsibility, that's theirs. I certainly heeded every warning signal I got, and tested myself against what they were saying. And I far more than matched that. What I'm trying to do is to leave space for the conclusion that maybe somebody else could have done better. But it's pride and it's conceit, but I think it's also accurate that I don't think anybody could have. That's my honest opinion. But I'm trying not to say that in the absolute sense. I'm trying to say that's my opinion. I'm not saying it's absolutely a fact that nobody could have done better, because that's a possibility. I just don't happen to know anybody I think could have done better, or that I'm sure could have done better. With the exception of a few people who would never take this kind of work. There are probably people like me who have done it once and therefore would never do it again. And I suspect that this state has a lot of lousy jobs that are of the same type that lots of people do once.

Here Brown seems a bit bemused, not quite clear on "where I'm missing it," as he thinks back over the year. But we see again his view that the problems were generated almost solely by the community's pressures, and that, on balance, no one could have been expected to do any better than he did. In short, as might be expected of nearly anyone who has decided to leave a conflictful situation, he pays little attention to the possibility that his own actions may have contributed to the outcome.

2. Biddle's reflections

At about the same time, Biddle was asked a similar set of questions by a researcher.

In response to a question asking for the main reasons why events unfolded the way they did, Biddle said:

> You know, I really haven't given a great deal of thought to that, although off and on I do when I get a little bit of time to do it. Part of that problem was strictly mine. Back in September or October, not of last year but the preceding year, a few of the parents in Lincoln Acres began to complain about, bitch about, start rumors about, the kindergarten at Oxford school. And two or three other kinds of things. Prior to that time, some of the Lincoln Acres people had stood up on their hind legs and screamed and moaned and groaned

> about township matters, about their own personal matters, and this sort of thing. They were fighting internally, tremendous amount of in-fighting among LAHA, among residents of that particular group or that particular development. So it was a rather amorphous kind of situation, which I suppose, if we hadn't been involved in the construction projects and other kinds of things that were very demanding, we might have looked at a little more carefully -- I might have. Hindsight is always better than foresight.
>
> Let me say this, had I really recognized how absolutely demanding some of the people would be, I would have forced myself to take the time to have gotten a little bit closer to it. I misread it from that point of view.

Concerning his role in the reorganization of the NBC and BJW team, Biddle explained:

> I wasn't getting pressure from the community directly. It was mentioned, I remember, at the Board of Education. But I had had some concerns about it myself and I had walked into the group. And I had expressed that at that point. But I thought that they could have been resolved rather readily. Oh, I don't know what all took place. It's very difficult to reconstruct. There was a series of meetings, as you well know, with parents. I deliberately stayed out of those for the simple reason that I did not want to give the impression that I was dictating what was going to take place in the school. I thought they could probably resolve it themselves. Hindsight, again, says, if I'd known that, I'd have been there from the very first meeting held.
>
> Researcher: Being out of those meetings was a mistake?
>
> Biddle: Yes, because I think probably I might have been able to say to the staff, hey, look, simply diagnostically, here's what you're doing, here is what's coming in, here's how it's coming across; you're doing this, you're saying that; this is the way you ought to be picking it up. That sort of thing. I did finally attend a couple of meetings with the BJW group, and the communication was just not there.

When asked if it was possible that the community reaction to the school was in part because Lincoln Acres was perceived as "Biddle's dream school" and thus a way to attack him, Biddle stated:

> I don't know. It's a possibility. But what I tried to do from the very outset was to say, this is not my

> school, it shall be planned by the staff and by the people within that particular building. I mean, the community that it serves.

In retrospect, along with having taken a more active role in managing the community, Biddle said:

> I would like to have done what I have done with every other preceding principal in this school district: insist that that person become involved in organizational development work -- as a prerequisite to anything. Two weeks, knowing full well that two weeks of that washes out in six months in a follow-up.

As far as Brown's performance was concerned, Biddle offered the following comments:

> Biddle: Oh, you know, I'd rather not even make any comment. Let me say that I think I could have done more than I did to be helpful to him.
>
> Researcher: You'd like to have been more helpful, so in part you're feeling you didn't supply as much assistance and support as he could have used.
>
> Biddle: Yes, that's partly true. You know, I don't really see this as my evaluation of him.
>
> Researcher: If he had wanted to stay, would you have accepted that?
>
> Biddle: He had a two-year contract.
>
> Researcher: So the decision to leave was essentially his.
>
> Biddle: With some encouragement.

Finally, Biddle's hope for the school for the next year was essentially that the original version would be recaptured.

> Well, for one, I have never been hung up on people having either open or closed space. I think that that is a professional decision that professionals need to make. I would hope that they could feel free enough -- and this is going to take some doing -- to trust each other, to work together as a team, start out with a very consistent pattern or somebody being responsible for a particular group of youngsters, branching out from that point as the needs of the youngsters indicate. In terms of hope, I would just hope that they would begin to recoup the kind

> of enthusiasm that they went into that school with initially. That's going to take a long time. But it may not. I think it's contingent upon how well they get off the ground in September, if we get off the ground in September.
>
> I think that it's entirely possible that the group of parents and the group of teachers can work constructively together. That's a foregone conclusion. That has to occur. That's not a hope. It's highest on the priority list. I think that's about all one can hope for. That's been a damned good school. The kids are amenable to working with adults, with each other. It has an absolutely magnificent mix of youngsters. It's one of those rare opportunities we should take full advantage of.

Here we see a superintendent acknowledging both the pressures of the surrounding community and to some degree his own fallibility, both in misdiagnosing the setting, and in not intervening even more vigorously than he did for support of the teachers and Ellis. His indirect acknowledgement of his doubts about Brown's performance is only a distant mirroring of Brown's feeling of complete lack of support. He closes with typically expansive optimism.

N. Commentary

Strong leadership -- an ingredient that many theorists view as essential for a successful innovation -- was present to some extent during the planning but notably absent in the implementation process. Although Biddle regretted not having acted more decisively, his stated aim was to permit the principal, teachers and parents to form their own school with minimal guidance from him. To a large extent he succeeded in this. Brown's view of his role was initially one of an active, "charismatic" leader. By the second month of school, however, his ability to assume such a role, he claimed, was diminished by the inadequate planning before he arrived and the lack of support from the superintendent and Board of Education. At any rate, neither man acted over an extended period of time as a strong leader, one who could actively influence the actions of those around him in the desired direction without the use or threat of force. Erratic, uncertain and often seemingly irrational leadership behavior was, undoubtedly, one of the causes of the failure to implement the core features of the new school. It was not, however, either the central or single cause, as some theorists claim (see especially Gross, et al., 1971 and Herriott and Gross, in press).

In our view there is validity to both Brown's and Biddle's interpretations; they were enmeshed in a larger field of forces that affected their leadership behavior. Properties such as the goal diffuseness, weak knowledge base, permeability to the environment, and domestication of public education affected the range of behavior that was available to them. Strong, decisive behavior was frequently either inappropriate or not possible, given these constraints and the community context of the school. Failure to recognize these inherent and contextual constraints leads to a conceptualization of innovations as flourishing or withering because of the support of one person, the leader.

By stating that leadership -- either the absence or presence of it -- is not the central element in the degree of implementation, we do not mean to lift the entire burden of the errors in judgment and the faulty decisions made in the Lincoln Acres school by Biddle, and especially Brown. Each made numerous important mistakes. But as documented in the preceding analysis sections, leadership is only one variable that determines the results of the highly complex social process of organizational innovation.

XI. THE SECOND YEAR: RECONSTRUCTION

The major research question posed by the second year of operation of the new school was: What, if any, parts of the original vision for the school will remain (or reappear) and be implemented? Corollaries to this question were: What lessons were learned from the previous year? What strategies would the new principal develop for managing the teachers and parents? What role would the community take during the second year? These questions are examined in this chapter, but substantially fewer data are presented than in the foregoing chapters.

A. The Beginning of School

In September, 1976, the division of teaching spaces in the school was substantially different than for the year before. All classes were separated; one had four walls and several approached being self-contained. Over the summer Biddle had had 36 large wooden cabinets constructed, which were placed throughout the instructional area in the fall, forming walls about eight feet high (they did not reach the ceiling). It was no longer possible to observe several classes from one location. The second year spatial arrangement is presented in Diagram VIII on the following page.

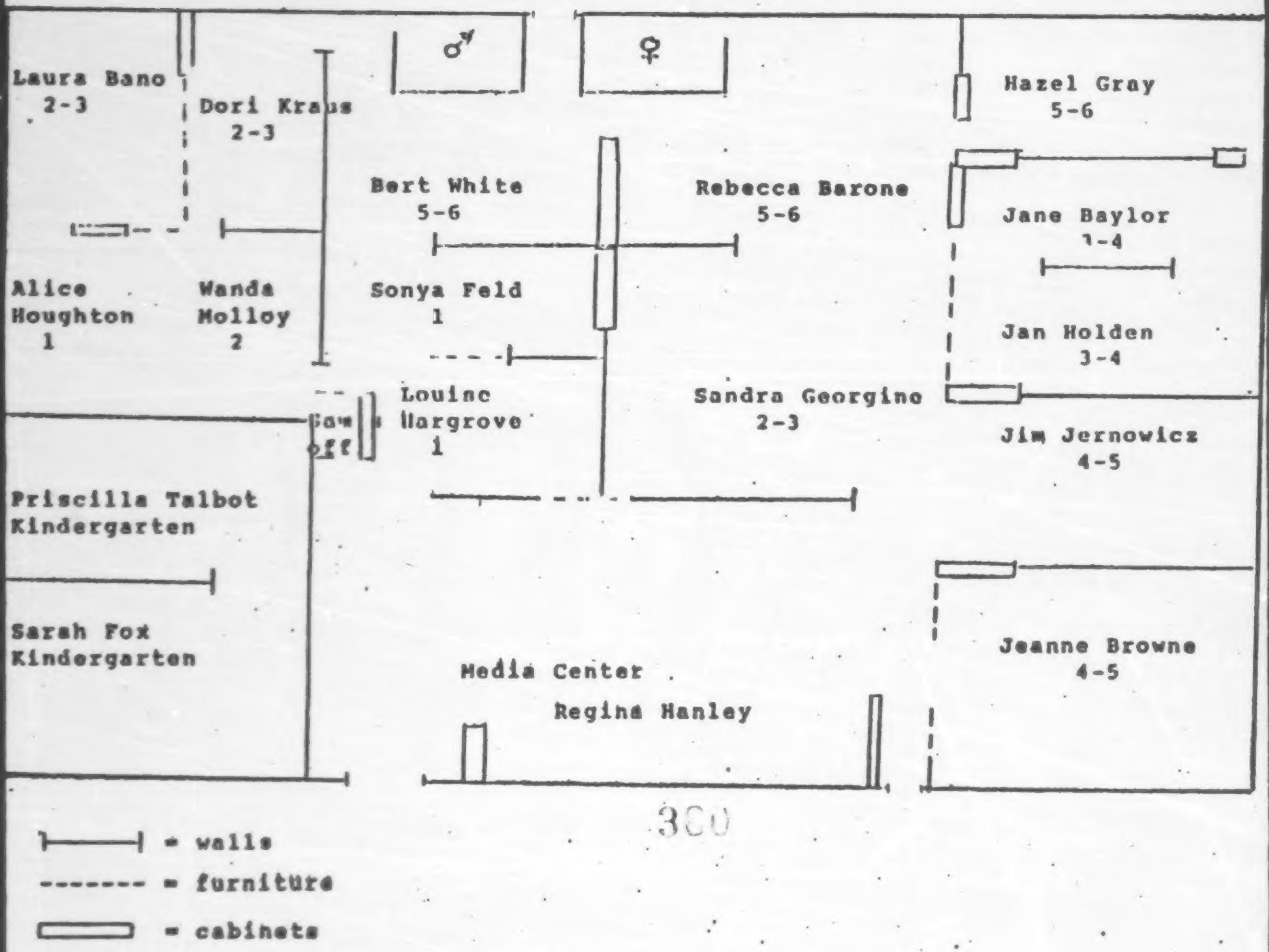
Alberta Bard's strategy was to buffer the teachers from the community, and take an incremental approach to reinstituting team teaching and the use of open space. This excerpt from an interview on September 8, 1976, illustrates her thinking at the beginning of the year.

> I plan to be fairly manipulative. Where I think they are really ready for it [team teaching] to enrich their program, I shall encourage it, as with Wanda and Alice. Where I think, because of their personalities or some other reason, they'd rather not, I will drag my feet. I think it can enrich programs for kids and I'd like to see it happen, but I think it's fraught with dangers. I really do, particularly in a school where there have been some problems in the past and people are going to be...I don't think the wounds are really all healed by a long shot and I'd rather not run the risk of anybody getting into a situation of getting kids involved in a team teaching situation where they haven't really worked out their personal relationships with one another.

An important aspect of Alberta's plan was that, even though she was well informed on the problems of the previous year, she retained an innovative intent for the school. Several teachers were also committed to the original vision: after several weeks Wanda, Alice, Jane and Jan Holden formed teaching teams. Several teachers used "open" teaching techniques in their self-contained classrooms. Other teachers, like Dori and Jeanne, preferred self-contained classrooms and made no effort to team teach.

DIAGRAM VIII

LINCOLN ACRES SCHOOL FLOOR ARRANGEMENT, FALL, 1976


♂
♀
Laura Bano
2-3
Dori Kraus
2-3
Hazel Gray
5-6
Bert White
5-6
Rebecca Barone
5-6
Jane Baylor
3-4
Alice
Houghton
1
Wanda
Molloy
2
Sonya Feld
1
Jan Holden
3-4
Gam
off
Louine
Hargrove
1
Sandra Georgine
2-3
Jim Jernowicz
4-5
Priscilla Talbot
Kindergarten
Sarah Fox
Kindergarten
Media Center
Regina Hanley
Jeanne Browne
4-5
= walls
= furniture
= cabinets

In early faculty meetings, Alberta told the teachers that she would make every effort to "keep parents off your backs" and establish positive school-community relations. And in the same interview excerpted above she stated:

> I plan to involve the parents whenever a group is working toward teaming, to involve the parents by having them come in and listen, participate in discussions. I think I can size up [the] general tenor of the community by talking with, or listening to, several of these subgroups. I would expect to be able to find out whether it is the team teaching they are objecting to -- which I doubt, really -- or whether it's lack of planning. Or, as I think is largely responsible for what happened last year -- just poor communications, just not being able to explain and when parents challenged them, becoming very defensive and everybody stopping listening. I may be wrong, but I am convinced at this point that if parents believe that their kids are being taught to read and write and do arithmetic, and if their kids are happy, they don't really care how the teachers go about doing that.

B. Early School Operations

In the early weeks of school, Alberta put an enormous amount of effort into the problem of cleanliness in the school. She made an especially pointed effort to inform the teachers of her awareness of the problem of keeping the school clean and asked for their cooperation. In this particular area, she was greatly influenced by the experiences of her predecessor. Also in the early weeks, Alberta -- with substantial advice from the faculty -- formulated the basic operational rules and procedures for the school, including such detailed matters as lunchroom procedures, use of duplicating machines, and the collection of milk money. In general, it appeared that both Alberta and the teachers were working toward establishing a sense of "normalcy" in the school.

One of the noticeable differences between Ellis and Alberta was her conscious attempt to create a sense of belongingness and openness in the faculty. Like Ellis, Alberta was called by her first name by the teachers. Unlike Ellis, however, she self-consciously had the teachers remove the tables from the faculty room for meetings and sit in a circle facing each other. This meeting style, which was intended to facilitate communication, continued throughout the year. More fundamentally, from the beginning of the year Alberta always consulted with the teachers when making decisions. Even in cases when she had already made a decision, she would present her reasoning and ask for comments from the teachers. Teacher suggestions often resulted in altered policies. As another method of keeping teachers informed, Alberta distributed a weekly memo listing school activities and special events. Her objective of direct, open communication with the teachers was usually achieved.

C. Relations with Parents

1. Managing parents

A few individual parents entered the school and spoke with teachers or observed classes during the first week of school. As a result of careful monitoring by Sam and Alberta, after a few weeks parents learned that they could only visit a teacher or classroom with an appointment. The control of parents, a central issue the first year, remained a highly sensitive area during the first weeks of the second year, but was managed more effectively. It should be noted as well, however, that eight of the highly critical parents had not returned their children to the Lincoln Acres school; thus most of the parents of children currently attending the school were interested in monitoring the school but not in actively changing it.

2. Reinterpreting the innovation

On September 16, for the first time in almost a year the school received positive publicity in the Washingtonville Courier. The front page headline read: "'Walls' don't slow kids' learning." Near the beginning of the article the author observed:

> The change, however, is primarily physical. There's been no change in the school's open education approach to learning.

In a series of quotes, Alberta elaborates on this. For example, she is quoted as saying:

> Open education doesn't necessarily mean open space, though open space can facilitate open education.
>
> I think the question of rooms, partitions and walls became symbolic of the fact that some parents felt their children were not learning. They did not understand some of the programs their children were involved with and it seemed to them that one of the main reasons that more learning was not taking place was because there was this open space and teachers couldn't conduct the kind of traditional classes they were used to. I think some extremely good teaching went on last year, but I'm not sure it was always explained adequately to the parents. I don't think that the teaching that goes on this year is going to be substantially different, but I think that the new arrangement of partitions is going to help teachers maintain programs that are comprehensible to parents.

In other words, the reality of education in Lincoln Acres school wasn't going to change in the second year, only its appearance, and its "selling" to parents. In the previous year, the faculty had attempted, and failed, to re-socialize the parents into accepting the original innovation. This year the strategy was different: the educational program was slightly altered, and explained so that it fit comfortable images of education that parents could readily identify with.

3. Open house

On September 29, the first open house of the year was held. Alberta structured it so that only 20 minutes would be spent by parents in their children's classrooms. Each teacher was responsible for his or her presentation to parents; Alberta only suggested that they not let parents simply wander through the classrooms. In all instances the teacher prepared a highly structured and fairly detailed presentation to explain their daily educational program. Parents were attentive, asked questions, but were not as hostile or probing as they had been the previous year. Most of the teachers thought the night went extremely well. Jim's indicator of success was:

> Somebody said to me that I had a nice beard. Last year they would have walked up to me and pulled it out hair by hair.

4. Hints of last year

The only internal crisis of the school year occurred a few weeks after the open house when a parent requested that her daughter be transferred from Bert's class to Fernwood school. Bert, it was claimed, did not provide the proper educational atmosphere for the child. Bert, who had experienced transfers the previous year, was deeply upset by what appeared to him to be an unjustified accusation. After several meetings with the parents, Bert and Alberta arranged to solve the problem by having the child transferred to Mrs. Barone's class. The rest of the teachers watched these events eagerly, but exercised caution and tried not to aggravate the situation; they particularly wanted to avoid forming factions within the faculty or between the teachers and administration. Their interest in the matter was natural: this incident could potentially create the same problems the NBC and BJW teams had experienced in the fall of last year.

During several meetings, the history of the transfer was presented and all of the teachers' questions were openly and satisfactorily answered both by Bert and Alberta. It was clear that the teachers thought that Alberta had managed the situation optimally and had acted in the best interest of the people involved.

With the successful passage of her first crisis, Alberta's authority was enhanced among the faculty. In general, her candid, supportive -- near-maternal -- way of working with the faculty contributed greatly to problem-solving, coping ability and organizational stability throughout the year.

D. School Life: Routinization

By November, the daily operation of the school was extremely smooth. The children had adjusted to the new spatial arrangements of the school, as had their parents. For the most part there was little change in teaching arrangements from those in place at the beginning of the year. Only two sets of teachers (Wanda, Alice, Jane and Bert White) were team teaching, and then only periodically. No other teachers seemed interested in collaboration. The basic difference in the school was Alberta's ability to command the respect of the teachers. We are reminded of Blau and Scott's (1962, p. 240) hypothesis that "A manager's ability to command the loyalty of his subordinates is inversely related to both his predecessor's and his superior's ability to command loyalty."

Relations with the community during the first months of the second year were harmonious. Teacher attendance did not improve at PTA meetings, but a permanent representative was appointed, and Alberta and Sam attended most meetings. The PTA sponsored fund-raising activities, and cultural events, and helped make arrangements for a playground that was to be constructed in the spring as a school-community project. In contrast with the situation last year, the PTA expressed no desire to influence internal, "professional", aspects of the school; its role became institutionalized as a social organization used to support school activities. This shift was probably a joint function of Alberta's careful attention, and the presence of a more moderate PTA president, Sandra Waters. In addition, LAHA, now supplanted by the PTA, no longer played an active role in school affairs. It did not, however, abandon its role as an organization for community action; throughout the spring the homeowners opposed the construction of a shopping center bordering the newest section of the Lincoln Acres development. They used the same tactics that they had employed to oppose the educational program of the school. These included strenuous protest at planning board meetings, endorsing candidates for town council, and petitioning. An interesting addition to their strategy was the use of outside planning, architectural and legal experts; during the school dispute they had not called on expert testimony, apparently feeling they had enough internal resources to successfully demand alterations in the school program.

Relationships between the school and community had, in fact, improved so significantly that on November 7, the Daily Eagle, a regional newspaper, reported: "Lincoln Acres School Solves Parent Problem". The article credited Alberta's leadership and the alterations in the building for improving the situation. After recounting the events of last year, the article continues:

> Frisch now says the school has made significant strides towards improving its problems and added that next year, when his daughter starts school, she probably will go to Lincoln Acres.

With this article, former critics began publicly endorsing the new leadership and educational program of the school; relationships between the school and community stabilized.

E. The Strike

The Board of Education was relatively uninvolved with the Lincoln Acres school in its second year. The main problem that Board members faced was that teachers and other personnel in the district had been without a contract for over a year; the Board hired a negotiator to work toward a settlement with the teachers' union and other employee associations. One important change in the Board this year was that Charles Frisch was elected president in October after Estelle Hunter resigned.

In comparison with the previous year, Bob Biddle was almost uninvolved with the Lincoln Acres school; his main concern was with the district budget and contract negotiations with the associations.

On November 20, the Washingtonville teachers, school aides, clerks and custodians formed a coalition and demanded that the Board bargain with all of their associations at one time instead of separately. The Board responded that this arrangement was unacceptable. As a result, the coalition called a job action that began on December 1, 1976. Basically, the job action required that union members work only the hours specified in their old contracts. This meant, for example, that there could only be one faculty meeting a week in the Lincoln Acres school and that teachers did not arrive early in the morning, nor stay after school.

Alberta, as an administrator,75) did not participate in the job action. She felt a slight tension between herself and the teachers and was disappointed because the job action meant that several activities the faculty was going to work on -- including increased team teaching -- would have to be postponed.

The job action lasted until the Christmas vacation. During this time, although some concessions had been made, little progress appeared in negotiations. The Board claimed it was limited by a state-imposed restriction on spending, part of the effort to equalize educational opportunity by equalizing municipal educational expenditures. The coalition claimed that there was money in the budget for salary increases and that the Board should negotiate directly with the coalition instead of through the hired negotiator, who was paid large sums and in their opinion did an inferior job.

On January 2, 1977, the day before school was to resume after Christmas vacation, the coalition went on strike against the school district. Picketing was widespread -- Lincoln Acres was picketed -- but

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75) Administrative contracts in Washingtonville are negotiated one year after teacher contracts are agreed upon.

after unsuccessful attempts in the third week of the strike several classes in Oxford elementary school were opened, staffed by parent volunteers and substitute teachers. This and other actions increased the strain between the administration, community and teachers. But after major concessions by the Board, the strike ended on January 24, 1977.

The strike did not damage relationships in the Lincoln Acres faculty. Teachers did not resent Alberta's non-participation. In fact, during the strike, Alberta and other administrators had urged that the Board grant concessions to the teachers. Among the teachers, the strike created a sense of camaraderie; although some resentment was expressed toward Priscilla, who did not participate, she was not punished afterward.

During the strike, the community's anger was directed toward all of the district's teachers, not specifically at the Lincoln Acres strikers. Only two community members -- Frisch in his role as Board president and Marie Bonomi, who crossed teacher picket lines to volunteer as a teacher -- were the targets of teacher resentment. Once school resumed there were no apparent lingering strains between the school and its community.

One important consequence of the job action and strike was that the teacher initiatives and planning time needed to move toward open space and team teaching were sharply reduced. Thus, by mid-November Alberta's plans to increase the degree of innovativeness were temporarily put aside. And after the lengthy strike it appeared even less feasible to attempt to innovate; once again there was a feeling that a return to "normalcy" was the wisest course to take. In other words, the strike ended an already halting effort to re-implement parts of the original plans. But for most teachers and the administration, the innovative vision did remain intact.

By February, under the pressure of budget deadlines, plans for the third year of school were being made. Alberta hoped to be able to actively encourage team teaching; she began looking for ways to remove walls and create open space classrooms.

F. The Spring: A Brief Summary

March was a quiet, uneventful month. Teachers, parents and students were well settled into the routines of school; there was scarcely a hint that a little over a month before there had been a district-wide school strike. Aside from talking about re-implementing the innovations for the third year, there were no other attempts to change the already established patterns of teacher and administrative behavior. The pervasive attitude was to "leave things well enough alone," and hope that the school year would end without further problems.

In early April, the long planned-for school-community project of building a playground for the school was realized. With the help of an outside consultant who organized and directed the construction, in two days the faculty and over 200 community volunteers erected an elaborate playground made from old tires and telephone poles. This was the most successful school-community venture to date; it served to prove to both parents and teachers that they could work together constructively.

G. The End of the Second Year

1. Brief summary

Even with the extension of the school year through the end of June due to the days lost to the strike, the problems in the school remained minimal and were confined to the daily operational level; there were no further crises. To relieve the strain of the long, hot, end of school, Alberta created a variety of activities including field trips, released time for teachers and school-wide assemblies. Although teachers did complain and energy levels dropped, these efforts were for the most part successful.

By the end of the year, Jeanne and Dori were on maternity leaves and Sam had sought and accepted a job as a teaching assistant-principal in a nearby progressive school district for the fall. All other teachers planned to return to the school.

By the end of the year, the plans for the third year that were first formulated in February were to continue in place, with incremental changes toward more team teaching and use of open space techniques. Before school ended, three sets of teachers were already planning to team teach, and two other sets were seriously discussing it. Several teachers, however, were definitely going to continue with self-contained classrooms and were not considering team teaching in the future. In other words, the school continued to move toward the original vision but was significantly altered, since a variety of teaching strategies would probably always be present. This was what many parents had originally demanded -- and the teachers had learned to accept.

2. The state of the school

In general, although much had not been accomplished in terms of the originally-planned innovations, the school was a substantially more satisfying work place for the teachers and administration by the end of the second year than it was at the close of the first year. Problem-solving capacities had increased, and a sense of unity and purpose began to emerge; the return to normalcy was a necessary process after the failures of the previous year. Much of this was the result of Alberta's administrative skills. In contrast to Brown, she provided a "rational", steady, uniform and "warm" approach, mixed with a sensitive reading of the events of the previous year which led her to treat both the teachers and parents with caution. It remains to be seen, of course, whether or not her efforts will result in increased innovation during the third year.

3. Community attitudes

As we have seen, relationships between the school and community improved considerably during the second year (with the exception of the teachers' strike). The harmonious relations that developed are reflected in the parents' rating of the school. When parents were retrospectively asked in June, 1977: "What kind of job did you think the school did in the first month or so it was open this fall?", 79% answered either "outstanding," "very good" or "good". By Christmas 81% of the parents rated the school as performing positively. At the time of administration of the questionnaire, 85% rated the school as performing positively, including 8% who thought that Lincoln Acres school did an "outstanding" job. This high rating was achieved even after the teacher strike. Finally, 75% thought that the school was doing a "much better" or "better" job compared with the same time (June) of the previous year. Twenty-three percent thought that the school did "about the same" job as in the previous year and only 2% thought that it was "worse".

These levels of satisfaction with the performance of the school were by far the highest at any point since the school opened. Interestingly, however, 32% of the parents thought that the teaching methods had not changed in the school from those used during the first year. Only 17% thought that the teaching methods had changed a "great deal". This suggests, then, that to a large extent the changes that increased parent satisfaction were of a non-instructional nature and had more to do with the efforts that the faculty and administration made to improve the image of the school that the community received. This is apparent in the write-in responses to the question: "If there have been changes, could you describe them briefly?"

> Things settled down. Parents and teachers worked together. More openness between school and home.
>
> There is a strong feeling that all is well.
>
> The biggest changes have been in communications between the parents and teachers, and the warm feelings of interest and concern for parent feelings on the part of the principal.

Only 28 parents (28%) described changes as they saw them; of these, six simply mentioned the disappearance of team teaching for their children. Fourteen said the changes were in effect toward a more traditional program, citing "more stress on basics", "structured atmosphere and teaching method", "more phonics", "more homework", "concern with academic, not with social skills", "more teacher instruction". On the other hand, seven parents felt the changes were in directions usually labeled innovative: "more independent study", "shift in emphasis from school work to play", "more responsibilities on children", "teacher concern for social success", "more relaxed atmosphere". It is also of some interest

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that two parents who had just moved into Lincoln Acres from Louisiana and New York City saw the program as comparatively non-traditional, and as not emphasizing academic work sufficiently. And several parents simply equated change or the lack of it with the fact that their children had new teachers or the same ones.

So while the shift to self-contained classrooms was evident, only half of those describing changes saw them as traditionally-oriented; the other half of those responding either mentioned the de-teaming, or saw new emphasis of a non-traditional sort. How many of these distinctions resided in the eyes of the beholder is not clear, but it is reasonable to guess that, on balance, the image of the instructional program changed more than the actual practices, with the possible exception of the shift away from team teaching.

H. Implementation Success

In sum, what can we say about the implementation of the Lincoln Acres vision, after two years of operation? Part I of this report lists four criteria of "good" implementation. The first is reasonable congruence with the core features of the original vision. On this count, success varies according to whose vision we are talking about. The more sweeping aspects of Biddle's vision, including the idea that the school should be "a situation where change is the main process" and education would be "redefined" were clearly not achieved. However, at a more modest level, his commitment to teaching teams, the importance of flexibility, the desirability of shared decision-making, and the notion of responsiveness to pupil and community needs were moderately realized. (The initial commitment to flexibility did permit, ironically, the erection of partitions that reduced flexibility; teaming was only partially present after two years with promises of more to come, and (again ironically) the responsiveness to community needs resulted in a less-innovative educational setting.)

Ellis Brown's vision included the goals of high adaptiveness, an "open" educational program with a strong "individualization" thrust, team teaching in open space, and the hope that Lincoln Acres would be a "model" for others. The "model" aspect never received explicit attention. Both team teaching and the amount of actual "open space" were much less in evidence two years later than Ellis would have hoped. The implemented school did probably succeed reasonably well in individualizing the learning environment for students, though how "open" it was is clouded by much ambiguity around most participants" use of the term. And as above, "adaptiveness" had a flavor of bowing to community wishes.

The teachers' early vision stressed individualization, creative use of the open space, and teaming. The latter two -- which were clearly core hopes -- must be counted as only partially achieved. We have some quantitative data bearing on the teachers' endorsement of certain goals, and the degree to which they felt these goals were achieved at various points in time (see Table 11.1).

TABLE 11.1

Teachers' Endorsement and Rated Achievement of Key Goals

Goal	Summer 1975 Endorsed*	December 1975 Endorsed/Achieved**	June 1976 Endorsed/Achieved	June 1977 Endorsed/Achieved
A. To provide personalized and individualized programming and instruction	100%	81%/67%	94%/65%	95%/74%
B. To increase the independence and autonomy of students	100	90/67	100/59	95/84
C. To foster an atmosphere of trust between adults and children	100	86/71	94/47	100/90
D. To try out innovative uses of space in the educational program	88	67/48	53/36	70/47
E. To increase "sharing" of teacher abilities, talents and skills	#	86/35	88/12	100/94
F. To experiment with new educational programs and structures	69	38/24	42/42	75/53
G. To teach students the basic skills	100	95/67	100/94	100/100
H. To give teachers a substantial role in setting policy	94	81/13	82/47	90/74
I. To develop good relations with the community	100	86/10	89/24	84/77
J. To have opportunities for professional growth	#	95/38	94/40	85/52

# Not collected

* "Endorsement" included answers of "agree" or "strongly agree" to the statement, "I think this is an important, valid and worthwhile goal for our school."

** "Achievement" included answers to "agree" or "strongly agree" to the statement, "Our school is achieving (or on its way to achieving) this goal.)

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By the end of the summer planning period, teachers had a more differentiated idea of key goals, partially stimulated by our extensive goals questionnaire. At that point they were committed to individualization (item A) and its associated goals of enhancing autonomy for students (B) in a trustful atmosphere (C). They were somewhat less committed to innovative space use (D), and only about two thirds had innovative, experimental hopes (F).[76] We also note commitment to three goals which have been recurrent issues in our account: teaching basic skills (G), providing for collegial policy influence by teachers (H), and developing good relations with the community (I).

It should be recalled that December, 1975 represented a crisis point in our account, that June, 1976 saw the departure of the first principal, and that June, 1977 was the end of the second full year of operation.

Looking at the individualization goal (A), commitment stays high, and rated achievement improves by the end of the second year. The same is true for the "climate" factors of autonomy for children (B) and adult-child trust (C).

The interest in innovative space use (D) drops substantially during the first year, then recovers somewhat, though its achievement, as might be expected given the additions of walls, remains low.

The commitment to "sharing" (an indirect expression of the teaming goal) remained high during the first year, but, as might be expected, was only weakly achieved. That almost all teachers feel this goal was realized by the end of the second year (in spite of limited teaming) may suggest a general improvement in climate, perhaps supported by the decisive upward shift in "teachers' role in setting policy" (H), which was at an all-time low in December, 1975.

We note too that commitment to maintaining community relations (H) stayed high as a goal, and its achievement was rated substantially higher at the end of the second year, following the abysmal record in the first year.

Finally, many teachers cited the importance of their own professional growth (J) as an important goal, and the proportion who felt this was achieved rose somewhat by the end of the second year.

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[76] This finding, along with the fact that only 50% of the teachers thought that Lincoln Acres should have the goal of "being different from traditional schools", suggests less commitment to innovativeness *as such* than the early rhetoric suggested. Perhaps selective recruitment and resocialization (which we discuss further in Chapter XII) were less effective than the planners had hoped. And the seeds of movement toward a more traditional school were in part present within the faculty -- not just "out there" in the community.

Meanwhile, the commitment to teaching basic skills (G) never wavered, and all teachers said this was being achieved by the end of the second year.

In general, then, we might conclude (a) that some succession and goal de-endorsement occurred in relation to using the open space, but goal commitments were generally maintained; (b) that by the end of the second year a decisive majority of teachers thought that the goals of child autonomy, trust, teacher sharing, and basic skills were at least "on the way" to being achieved; (c) that a sizable group thought that individualization, collegial decision-making, and good community relations were being achieved; (d) that only about half the teachers thought innovative space use, and educational experimentation more generally, was occurring, though the trend was upward.

We should note, however, that the typical achievement level was "agree", rather than "strongly agree" (with the exception of the basic skills and teacher sharing goals) so the picture is a moderate one, especially if we allow for the idea that teachers might be inclined to give higher ratings of achievement of goals for which they were held accountable (such as teaching basic skills).

On balance, looking at all the categories of planners and implementers, we conclude that the implemented school fell somewhat short of its planners' hopes. It was not notably and strongly congruent with the original goals, even when allowance is made for the fact that some initial hopes were perhaps too lofty to be achieved.

When implementation success is judged by stakeholders satisfaction, Lincoln Acres looks better. Both parents and teachers, by the end of the second year, felt that the school was functioning well. And we never got any impression that students felt dissatisfied or upset by their life in the school. Parents' satisfaction probably stemmed as much from the fact that they saw the school as, finally, responsive to their wishes as from any other aspects of goal achievement. For teachers, though they had had to give up or moderate their hopes for open space and teaming, satisfaction may well have stemmed from the increased stability, collegial decision-making, and freedom from the community pressure that had marked the first year.

Problem-coping ability, our third criterion of implementation success, appeared to be strong. No longer did the internal or external situation of the school threaten to be out of control, beyond the coping range of the principal and teachers.

Learning outcomes, our last criterion, seemed well achieved, though that fact is of course clouded by the high socio-economic status of Lincoln Acres children -- and by the fact that we do not have any measures available other than normal achievement tests. Seen in comparison to other elementary schools in the district (and, probably to those in neighboring districts), Lincoln Acres was probably doing well.

So, all in all, though much was lost from the original vision, the school can be counted a moderately successful implementation. But the loss of core hopes is not minor. Producing a school that works well and satisfies its stakeholders is not the same thing as realizing an innovative dream.

I. Analysis and Commentary

What might account for the degree of implementation success we noted? We shall have more to say about this in the following chapter: here we comment mainly on the primary planning/implementation tasks and how well they were carried out.

Considering the primary task of political stabilization, the school was functioning well. Many of the community complaints had been satisfied; there was no longer cause for the initial worry over the new school. Secondly, the physical structure of the school did not permit the parents an opportunity to examine the teachers' work closely, in contrast to the first year -- and third, parents' entry to the school was carefully controlled. And, there was a certain amount of battle-weariness on the part of both the teachers and parents.

But there was also evidence that the faculty had heeded the lessons of the previous year: their actions toward the community were more deliberate and well-planned. The net effect was not only to create harmony, but to elicit constructive community action (as the playground example illustrates). We should also note that Biddle viewed Alberta favorably, and did not intervene in the school, so relations with the bureaucratic environment were also quite stable.

On the task of knowledge utilization, though matching consultant funds were still available, and Alberta considered drawing on them, she did not do so. One special workshop was held with an outside expert, but the pattern of relying on insiders' knowledge and skills continued. Given the consolidating, retrenching and stabilizing strategy being followed, it seems unlikely that increased use of expert assistance could have aided fuller implementation of the original hopes.

What occurred in relation to vision development? The second year of operation of the Lincoln Acres school retained elements of the original vision of the school: there was some team teaching and open space education. Alberta's plans for increasing implementation of the early hopes, however, were not realized. In part this was due to the job action and strike -- and to the teachers' reluctance to collaborate after the failures of the previous year. But by the end of the year more teachers were planning to team teach in the third year. We conclude that although some of the innovations were discontinued, a significant portion of the mechanics were retained and the vision remained; the innovative effort did not end with the apparent failure of the first year. It did, however, decrease.

Actualization of the social-architectural design (which did not differ in any important respect from that of the previous year) was limited, and proceeded with reasonable effectiveness. The second year was primarily a consolidating period.

The teachers and Alberta were careful in their relations with each other (as they were with the community). An example of this was Alberta's inclusion of the faculty in all important decisions. Although decision-making was more centralized than in the original vision, Alberta's model of consultation with the teachers created a professional or collegial organization, of the sort which had been originally desired by both teachers and administration.

The teachers' behavior during the strike also illustrates the increased thoughtfulness of their actions. They were careful not to create schisms within the faculty, even in a situation of extreme tension.

In general, it can be argued that the degree of actualization achieved was in important respects a function of the calming, stabilizing -- and *active* -- role played by the new principal. Though her exercise of the role took place in a setting with much reduced community pressure and increased legitimacy, we cannot discount her personal style as a factor. Though teachers (as well as the community) were clearly ready to accept her leadership, it made a difference that she was politically skillful, collaborative, did not maintain distance, and was proactive about problem-solving.

Finally, we should not overlook an obvious point. The second year of school did not have to contend with the problems associated with newness, especially innovative newness. Role demands were simplified, clarified, reduced and enforced; uncertainty was down, and teachers did not have to cope with the overload which is characteristic of new systems. In brief, *institutionalization* was well under way (though, as we have noted, institutionalization of the team teaching portion of the vision was yet to occur in a comprehensive way). And the role of the PTA in the school had clearly become routinized and stabilized.

XII: CONCLUSION:
SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

In the preceding chapters we have presented an ethnographic account of the planning, implementation and subsequent change in a complex, large-scale organizational innovation, itself composed of several smaller innovations. Throughout the text our commentary and analysis focused on the accomplishment of the six primary planning tasks and the resolution of the associated dilemmas presented in Part I. In this chapter, we examine further the changes in the organization from the point of implementation of the school, and suggest several implications for theories of organizational innovation. To accomplish this we begin with a review of the changes in organizational structure during the first year.

A. Changes in Organizational Structure: An Overview

Over the course of the first year, the Lincoln Acres school changed from a collegial organization to a legal-rational bureaucracy. The basic changes in organizational structure were caused by re-definitions of the type of education offered by the school, which, in turn, were produced by the interactions between the school and the community.

1. Collegial organization

During the planning period and at the point of implementation[77] the faculty defined education as "child-centered", with an emphasis on individualization of instruction and affective growth, along with a program of traditional cognitive skills. Conceptualizing education in this way -- as a non-uniform technology -- resulted in the creation of a collegial organization, a form which was congruent with the value orientations of the faculty. The mechanism for managing instructional tasks was the faculty's internalization of the values and norms of the school. The majority of teachers ignored the external environment, for the most part; the major device for maintaining organizational boundaries was the delegation of authority to the principal to buffer, negotiate with and possibly co-opt community groups.

Force and force threat. From the time of teacher selection until early implementation of the innovations, community criticism of the educational program intensified. Shortly after implementation, the result of community pressure was a transitional period in the school; there was at first disorganization, followed by a coercive compliance structure.

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77) As we have seen, levels of implementation varied throughout the school, with at least one teaching "team" never actually using the team teaching technique, which can probably be seen as the central innovation.

At this time, the failure to maintain uninterrupted functioning of the organization seemed largely due to the lack of a clear distinction between the organization and its environment. Community complaints and close scrutiny of school activities by several parents eventually resulted in a forced reorganization of two teaching teams.

Bureaucracy. Finally, in reaction to the firing of a teacher, administrative ineptness and frequent intervention in school activities by community members, the faculty instituted rules within the school, and between the school and community, in an attempt to end what most teachers considered the arbitrary use of force. In the process, the original goal of child-centered education was abandoned, and replaced with a modified "back-to-basics" educational philosophy. Paradoxically, the evolved organizational structure -- bureaucracy -- was no longer suitable for highly individualized, creative education, even though several teachers wanted to restore it.

Following succession to a new leader, it appeared that the operating model had shifted somewhat back toward the collegial model, and hopes for fuller implementation reappeared. But bureaucratic firmness was still clearly in evidence.

B. Organizational Change and the Environment

The primary source of organizational change stemmed from the educators' failure to maintain or create positive relations with the community throughout planning, and especially during the implementation stage. We have identified this as the task of political stabilization and noted that the major dilemma associated with it is whether to confront outside groups or withdraw from contact with them. During planning there was a distinct pattern of environmental avoidance. In the implementation stage, the teachers responded considerably more actively by attempting to resocialize the parents; they eventually engaged in pressure tactics similar to those used by the parents. Overall, the interaction of the organization with its environment had major consequences for implementation success. Our discussion will focus on two central consequences: a change in the rate of planning, and organizational rigidity. A third area, power -- which is essentially what the conflict was over -- influenced both of the above as well as almost all aspects of the school.

1. The rate of change

Initially, the faculty and principal said they intended to implement the innovations slowly and deliberately. By the time school opened, however, except for assurances the principal gave the parents that the change would be "incremental", the original strategy was almost completely abandoned. As community complaints intensified, the faculty experienced an increasing need to defend their competence to their critics. Eventually, to establish their legitimacy as competent educators, they felt that rapid, tangible results were required -- a demonstration that open education as it was envisioned would actually work. This increased the attempted rate of implementation substantially. It also altered the faculty's passive stance toward the community to one of confrontation. Another consequence of the shift in change rate was that the time to do the planning decreased just as internal organizational stress accumulated. It also increased the costs to the faculty if the innovations failed. In other words, the hastily revised planning strategy affected the accomplishment of all the other planning tasks, which, because of their roughly developmental sequence, affected each other.

In their study of a new, innovative elementary school which attempted to utilize educational techniques similar to those in Lincoln Acres, Smith and Keith (1971) concluded that an incremental change strategy -- slow, deliberate installation of innovation -- is preferable to what they term "the alternative of grandeur," the implementation of a complex innovation at a single time. They reached this conclusion after observing the failure of a school designed and implemented according to the alternative of grandeur.

As we mentioned in Chapter II, Smith and Keith used a closed system model; they did not examine the influence of the organizational environment on the degree of implementation of the innovation (they did, however, hint several times that the local community was dissatisfied both with the way the superintendent of schools ran the school district, and the types of innovations in the new school). From their perspective, then, determining (and presumably controlling) the rate of change is a relatively straightforward matter; the planners choose a strategy and then manipulate the relevant organizational variables. The external environment, it is assumed, remains constant and therefore not problematical. We have suggested, however, that because of features in the context of American education it is extremely likely that new educational techniques will face resistance from various external forces -- resistance which must be managed. The case of Lincoln Acres clearly demonstrates this.

2. Organizational rigidity

Faculty internalization of the norms, values and goals of the school was intended to provide the motivation to innovate and sustain the innovative effort. The social organization of the school also flowed from the values of a particular educational philosophy. Contingencies that arose in the performance of the non-uniform type of education that was planned were to be the responsibility of the individual teacher or the teaching teams. There were no a priori rules governing all situations; initially, explicit school-wide rules were minimal. This approach provided a fairly sharp departure from the traditional school practice of highly bureaucratic administration; collegiality, which is what the underemphasis of rules was intended to promote, is not a common feature of most American elementary schools.

Two mechanisms were used to achieve internalization of the norms, values and goals of the school. First, only teachers with a propensity to work in an open space, team teaching school were recruited (cf. Kritek, 1976); teachers reluctant to participate in the planned changes would present serious obstacles to any attitude-change effort. Second, through the planning meetings, informal gatherings, the shared decision-making style, the communications workshop and the summer training program, there was a concerted effort to resocialize the teachers. This included socialization into the normative climate of the emerging organization, and retraining for the skills necessary for implementing the innovations. To a large extent the teachers absorbed the educational values more completely than the teaching techniques that would help to actualize them. This situation, as we shall see, had multiple consequences for the school.

In a recent study, Gross, et al. (1971) argue that theories of organizational change such as Lewin's (1951), which rely primarily on the removal of resistance to change through resocialization into the innovative values, are not adequate. To demonstrate this, Gross and his associates studied an urban elementary school which was planning to implement a new role for teachers. All participants in the innovation were initially favorably inclined to undertake it -- that is, they were non-resistant. After observation of classrooms over a period of months and interviews with the faculty, Gross et al. found that the presence of an inclination and the desire to change was not sufficient to produce the intended changes. They identified three additional elements necessary for change: (1) role clarity; (2) removal of administrative barriers (for example, adjustment of school schedules to meet the requirements of the innovation); and (3) the presence of strong leadership, which in their view was the critical factor.

The present study provides some support for this argument: a desire to change is clearly not enough. In the ethnographic account we have seen repeatedly that while the motivation to change was strong, almost all roles in the organization were poorly understood and consequently not well actualized (for example, the role of resource teacher). Administrative barriers were not problematic in the Lincoln Acres school, since the faculty benefited from a building appropriately designed for the educational program. Finally, although weak and erratic leadership was a factor in the failure to innovate, we have suggested above that it is not as central as Gross et al. indicate. Of course, we would add the assertion that environmental variables, and the ways they are controlled by planners and implementers also influence the degree of implementation. Nevertheless, it appears that resocialization, if not the central element in organizational innovation, retains a position of importance. This discussion leads us to consider the negative consequences of resocialization, especially under conditions of high interaction with the external organizational environment.

In bureaucratic structures, the phenomenon of the displacement of goals through ritualistic adherence to *a priori* rules has been recognized as a source of dysfunctional behavior (Merton, 1968, p. 249-260). Sources of dysfunctions in other types of organizations, particularly human relations or collegial structures, have been relatively unnoticed. Indeed, the collegial type of organization is usually considered to be the opposite of bureaucracy; it is viewed as being more flexible, primarily since power is decentralized and there are a limited number of _a priori_ rules, facilitating the disposal of cases since contingencies can be dealt with more efficiently. This study suggests, however, that under conditions of rapid and large-scale change, there are some sources of dysfunctional behavior in collegial organizations.

In this case, selective recruitment and resocialization into organizational values and goals were intended to help the organization innovate and manage internal contingencies. But these very features created inappropriate responses to environmental demands. Specifically, as a result of their high degree of commitment to the educational philosophy of the school, the faculty were reluctant to negotiate with the community or alter their plans voluntarily. The very rate of implementation effort was increased because of the strength of the teacher's values and their fear of diluting the idealized vision of the school. In other words, rigid insistence on the accomplishment of abstract educational goals by particular means occurred largely because of _over_-resocialization.

If there had been a bureaucratic structure in the school initially, adjustment to parent demands could have occurred without major difficulties, since a change in policy at the top leadership level could have been communicated to the other faculty members and implemented. To change a collegial organization rapidly would have meant that a _second_ process of resocialization would have had to occur. An implication, then, for major innovative efforts is that it may be useful to have a minimal number of rules or a clear understanding that the administration can make unilateral policy decisions in specified areas or under certain circumstances. Of course, another option would be for the organization to develop more sensitive information-gathering devices, along with strategies for roles designed either to buffer the organization from the environment or make it more responsive.

These remarks about dysfunctions of collegial organizations should be tempered by the observation that the Lincoln Acres school was not a "pure" or fully-realized collegial organization; even from the beginning the faculty's participation in decision-making was less than full. It could be argued that a "real" collegial organization would have engaged in better environmental sensing and problem-solving. But even so, the risk that a cohesive, mutually supportive group of innovators faces is that of environmental avoidance, and rigid adherence to plans.

3. Power

The primary source of authority claimed by the teachers was expertise in education. However, as we have seen throughout the narrative, this claim was repeatedly challenged by the parents; there was a pervasive lack of trust in the teachers' abilities, and their legitimacy as professionals was never fully established. When the conflict over the educational program intensified, and the parents convincingly displayed their own familiarity with educational matters, the teachers' reaction was to continue to claim -- in effect, demand -- recognition as professionals. But under the constant surveillance of the community, it became clear not only to the parents but eventually to several teachers as well that there were in fact serious shortcomings in the school.

As part of their effort to gain legitimacy, the teachers attempted to demonstrate to the parents that the innovations were being carefully implemented and were working. And they tried to re-socialize their critics. The intention was to convince skeptical community members -- especially leaders -- that open education was a valid form of education that their children would benefit from. A variety of communication mechanisms were used in this effort: open houses, koffeeklatches, private conferences, visits to homes and articles in the local newspaper. Paradoxically, the more exposure the parents had to the actualities of the activities in the classroom and to the teachers' explanations of the educational program, the more the parents became suspect of the educators' abilities. Thus, an unanticipated consequence of purposive rational action (Merton, 1936) appeared. The strategy used to defend the innovations -- claiming and demonstrating professionalism -- raised the expectations of the parents. But, in the process, the teachers failed to provide acceptable evidence of expertise, thereby systematically undermining the very claims they had made.

The attempted resocialization pattern described above locates a significant problem for theories of organizational change. A central assumption of many change theories is that mechanisms exist to change not only the organization but also groups external to the organization (see Rothman, 1974). For example, the balance theory of school-community relations (Litwak and Meyer, 1974) assumes that through the appropriate use of "linkage mechanisms" between a formal organization and a primary group (family or neighborhood), the organization can reduce the social distance between itself and the external group, thereby increasing the possibility of changing the target population. In cases of primary groups characterized by high resistance to or open conflict with the goals of the organization, the theory suggests that the formal organization should use a communication device high in primary group properties. For example, face-to-face relations should be established with the primary group, to increase trust and reduce the possibility of avoidance or distortion of complex information. The case of the Lincoln Acres school suggests, however, that when conflict between an organization and external primary groups is intense and the primary groups are well informed and powerful, the assumption of change through communication does not hold. It appears that in situations where the formal organization and the primary groups have value systems that are diametrically opposed, there is little that the organization can do to influence the primary group, short of "brainwashing"78) or an experience and accompanying change in world view as profound as that of religious conversion (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). On their side, the primary groups can act, as did the Lincoln Acres parents, to have personnel removed from the school; that is not easily done, but is possible under conditions of lay control of public education. A course of action open to the school is to restrict attendance to children from families in agreement with the school's educational philosophy, a strategy approximated in the "educational options" idea, where within a district school programs differ in explicit ways, and can be chosen by parents.

The educators in our case may have failed to persuade the community because the knowledge base of education is weak; there may not have been much supportive information to communicate. For example, if instead of studiously avoiding expert knowledge, the Lincoln Acres teachers had made a systematic search of research literature concerning the two central innovations they attempted, they would not have found much to encourage their efforts. In a thoughtful review of the research literature on team teaching, Armstrong (1977, p. 83) concludes that:

> ...one is struck by the very basic nature of the questions for which research has failed, after fifteen or more years of team teaching, to supply at least tentative answers. Team teaching, it is evident, represents one of those educational practices that have not been subjected to truly intensive and systematic investigation. Support for team teaching has been more of a validation through affirmation than a validation based on empirical evidence. At this juncture, little in the research literature provides solace either for team teaching's critics or its most ardent supporters.

Similarly, McPartland and Epstein (1977) report finding no relationship between open education and achievement, contrary to what the Lincoln Acres teachers assumed to be true.79)

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78) The teachers' use of the "brainwashing" term referred only to mild propagandistic efforts with the children; real value changes of the sort associated with serious "brainwashing" require near-total environmental control.

79) It is entirely possible that there are benefits to the social and emotional growth of students in team-taught, open-space classrooms, but the "hidden curriculum" of these educational settings has not been systematically studied.

Of course, there are other functions of knowledge utilization, among them establishing legitimacy by using knowledge symbolically. For example, experts with national reputations could have been used by the local educators to make presentations to community associations such as LAHA, thereby lending experience and prestige in support of the innovations. But the local educators' intuition reigned, and the rationale for the innovations seldom rose above the level of platitudes. Judging from the actions that the parents took against the school, the faculty presentations must have seemed like aggressive displays of ignorance.

The domination of Lincoln Acres school by the community suggests that under certain circumstances a community can exercise enough power over an organization to change it rapidly and fundamentally. Several important features of the Lincoln Acres community permitted successful use of power against the school. First, there was a strong voluntary association, LAHA, whose members had previously experienced several conflict situations; techniques for organizing were well established which enabled the use of a wide array of strategies including petitions, the mass media, political skill and personal influence. Second, a substantial portion of the community had detailed knowledge of education through experience as teachers. This gave them a claim to expertise and a foundation for their criticisms of the school. Third, the child-rearing stage in the life cycle and the relatively high economic status of most residents made the education of their children a central concern.

Along with these factors, the larger context was important. As the conflict progressed, support from other communities within the township for the Lincoln Acres community increased. This support was not offered entirely in sympathy for the Lincoln Acres community, but presented an opportunity to unite against the superintendent of schools as part of the national "back-to-basics" movement. The majority of Board of Education members were disaffected and consequently did not act as a legitimating device for the policies of the superintendent of schools as they usually do (Kerr, 1964). In contrast, in the school decentralization dispute in Ocean-Hill Brownsville, although there was strong support in the local community, the larger urban community and the bureaucracies did not actively support local efforts, with the result that local control was lost (Gittell and Berube, 1968).

Another contrasting example appears in our project's study of a new experimental high school in an urban area with a large Black and Hispanic population. We quote:

> By and large, the attitudes and behavior of parents seemed to be typical of working class schools, namely, passive, supportive and uninformed. Nine out of ten believed that teachers and the principal "worked hard to make this a good school," and eight out of ten felt that "it means something to graduate from this school." Further, only a third thought that parents should have a lot of power in

> influencing the school's activities, and about the same percentage felt that they did have such power. Overall, the parents felt that the school was better than their children's former school. However, only a little more than a half had had any contact with the school, and these contacts were almost invariably initiated by the teachers. Less than one out of six had attended a school meeting where teachers were present.

So, as one would expect, social class and race appear to be important factors in determining the success of community efforts to influence schools and educational policy.

Of course, the "liability of newness in this innovative organization (Stinchcombe, 1965) may have helped the community to prevail. In part because of newness, roles were not well defined, communication was irregular, and internal stress (and eventually conflict) were high. These conditions were of course aggravated by environmental turbulence, but they basically made the school more vulnerable to environmental alteration. To a large extent, the community battered down the figurative walls of an already weak organizational structure, only to put them (and the literal ones) back up.

Overall, the pattern of individual and collective action taken by the Lincoln Acres residents counters the view of industrial society as a "mass" society characterized by the reduction of intermediate levels of power, the increased influence of the mass media and a national network of bureaucracies that control major decisions (Nisbet, 1953; Marcuse, 1964; Mills, 1956). In particular, the power of the community in this case suggests that middle-class suburbia is not necessarily the disorganized product of industrialization, bureaucratization and urbanization (Stein, 1960). People can still control their schools, at least -- even if their control is not always exercised with wisdom.

APPENDIX A

METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

Reconstruction of methodology, the logic of inquiry, provides a means for evaluating the reliability and validity of the data and findings presented in a study. The first portion of this appendix describes the methods used to collect the data, and discusses their limitations, problems and advantages. We then turn to a discussion of the data analysis techniques, especially the problems involved with making sense of large amounts of qualitative data.

A. Selection of the Research Site

Based on the rationale that more could be learned from a positive example than a negative one, our primary objective in selecting a research site was to find a new school that was not only innovative but appeared to have a good chance of having the planned innovations successfully implemented. Crude indicators of probable "success" were: (1) the presence of resources (for example, a building and qualified, interested personnel), (2) an innovative intent or vision, and (3) adequate planning time before implementation.

Potential sites were located through telephone calls to consultants, county superintendents, personnel at other innovative schools, local school people and others who might be aware of a new school's opening. The person who nominated Lincoln Acres school was a state department of education administrator of Title II federal funds. In her opinion the Washingtonville school district had a reputation of being innovative and cooperative with researchers.

After interviews with the superintendent of schools and other central office personnel, it appeared that compared with other available sites,1) Lincoln Acres school ranked high on the selection criteria.

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1) For example, one site visited by the researchers was a new five-million dollar regional high school that featured open space architecture. To estimate the probable degree of "success", we observed a meeting of the planning committee, which was composed of department chairmen. Their primary concern was finding ways to partition the school and move the existing program intact into the new building. After further interviews with the people involved, including the superintendent of schools, it seemed clear to us that innovation of any type was unlikely. In other sites, planning had progressed beyond the stage when it could be meaningfully studied. In still another school, the school's principal was uncomfortable with being the object of research, and refused to participate in the study after several preliminary discussions.

Finally, it should be evident to the reader by now that the selection criteria proved to be less than accurate predictors.2)

B. Entering the Research Site

Gaining access to the relevant social groups in the school and community was accomplished in four stages. Entry began with the superintendent of schools, then turned to the principal, the community, and finally, the teachers. Each of these entry processes is briefly described below.

1. Entry I: The superintendent

Initial contact with the school district was made through the superintendent. Robert Biddle had worked with Matthew Miles, the project director, 20 years earlier in an action-research project; he was interested in learning about the current research project and trusted Miles.

In a preliminary meeting with Biddle, Little, and Smith, at which time the potential success of the school was assessed, it was mutually determined that both parties were interested in collaboration. It was agreed, however, that for the research to begin, the principal, who was to arrive in Washingtonville a month later, should be fully informed of the nature of the study and have the right to agree or decline to participate in the research.

The terms of a proposed contract agreement between the project and the school were reviewed, but its completion was left for after the meeting with the principal.

2. Entry II: The principal

Three days after Ellis Brown reported for work in Washingtonville, he met with members of the research staff to discuss the project and the possibility of participating in it. Brown's major concern was that the

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2) Apparently, predicting the success of an innovation is not an easy matter; of the six sites that were eventually selected by the Social Architecture project, only one realized intended plans during the first year of operation. Alternative explanations are that we picked the wrong indicators of probable success -- or are simply bad guessers.

study could possibly interfere with the functioning of the school, especially the way in which teachers would behave under observation. After assurances that every effort would be made not to interfere with or intervene in school activities, Brown appeared satisfied. But to protect both parties,one provision in the contract agreement stated that the research could be terminated by either side after discussion of any problems that developed. Another provision was that as soon as they were selected,the teachers would have the opportunity to vote on whether or not to participate in the study. The contract also included statements concerning confidentiality and anonymity of data as well as a clause offering periodic summary reports at agreed-upon times.

In this meeting the use of a consultant on a matching-grant basis -- $800 to be provided by the Center for Policy Research -- was also discussed. Brown did not view consulting help as either desirable or necessary; instead of being a tool for increasing the likelihood of collaboration and establishing positive relationships,as the researchers had expected, the offer of consultant help created some tension. As it developed, however, Brown, Biddle and the researchers did sign the agreement3) and four days later research began with Brown's being interviewed about his past educational experiences and the programs he envisioned for the Lincoln Acres school. Soon after, retrospective interviews focusing on the history of the planning were held with the superintendent and assistant superintendents.

3. Entry III: The community

Since the faculty was not yet selected, but Brown had been asked to present his plans for the new school to various community groups, the parents of children scheduled to attend Lincoln Acres school became the next group that I encountered. Initial contact was through observation of LAHA and other community groups. I was a silent observer in these meetings and did not actively interview anyone. Informal interviews did develop, however, when residents asked me if I was new in the community. I used these occasions both to gather information and to explain my objectives. In most cases there appeared to be understanding of what I was doing and no fear of my presence. In at least one instance, however, a parent abruptly ended my conversation with him when he found that I was not a total participant but only an observer.

During this initial period of attendance at community meetings, in interviews with Biddle and his associates, I tried to find out which community members had been central in the early planning for the school. Most of these residents were then contacted and interviewed about the history of the planning, the history of the community (for example, the

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3) When Alberta Bard became principal the original agreement was renegotiated with few changes and signed by both parties.

formation of LAHA), and the current state of the community. In these interviews names of other active community members surfaced.

In general, entry into the community was extremely smooth. After several months I found myself able to sit in the living rooms of Washingtonville residents to observe meetings, or simply to ask them questions about recent events connected with the school. My impression was that in all but a few instances there was full cooperation and candor in the information supplied.

4. Entry IV: The faculty

Sam Pennington was interviewed shortly after he had been appointed resource teacher. Pennington had participated on the building design and principal selection committees and was therefore viewed as an important informant. He also wanted to be assured that the proposed research would not interfere with the formation of a cohesive faculty, and that "The teachers won't think you're looking over their shoulders all the time." After a discussion of social science research methods,he was convinced that the research would not be too harmful and agreed to participate.

At the first faculty meeting, without my presence, the research was informally approved by the teachers. At the second faculty meeting, Brown introduced me and I then explained the research objectives and conditions. In particular, I stressed that all information would be confidential and anonymous, and that I would not intentionally intervene in school matters, nor perform an evaluative function. There were no questions concerning the research.

In the next few faculty meetings, I made a strong, self-conscious effort to behave in accordance with the role I had verbally described.4) As a result my early interactions with the faculty were limited to greetings and note-taking. After several faculty meetings, once the teachers began to know each other and felt more at ease, my interaction with them also increased.

One important characteristic that may have increased initial contact with the faculty is that I was approximately the same age as most of them.5) This reduced status inequalities and expectations of potentially

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4) It is fair to say that my self-consciousness, in the sense of self-awareness, often with concomitant tension, remained high throughout the study.

5) As research progressed, age assumed less importance; Regina, Sarah, and Priscilla, all middle-aged teachers, were as easy to talk with as the younger teachers.

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threatening behavior, since I was probably not perceived as more highly educated or experienced than they were.

Another advantage during entry was that the faculty members were new to each other in most instances. While this produced some tension and awkwardness in the first months of the group formation process for both the teachers and myself, it also meant that I didn't have to penetrate well-established friendship groups, or to learn and then manipulate numerous other strategically important facts about existing social relationships. Of course, the advantage of newness presented the problem of trying to avoid influencing the group formation process while at the same time studying it and necessarily becoming a group member. This problem was managed -- successfully, I believe -- by maintaining a consciously marginal position in the organization. Marginality was usually not a difficult element of my role,since the teachers were usually too occupied with work to pay much attention to what I was doing. In general, a clear description of my role followed by congruent behavior and, most of all, patience, proved to be the important ingredients of the entry process.

Entering the social systems of the community and the school with the endorsements of the superintendent and principal was beneficial (see Scott, 1965); it helped establish the research as a serious and legitimate activity. One potential problem that this procedure presented was the possible perception that the researcher was a representative of the school administration, serving, for example, as a secret evaluator. Thus the behavior of, and information supplied by respondents -- particularly teachers -- could have been self-conscious, evasive or in some other way altered. In the early stages of research there were no indications that this was the case; maintaining an independent research role was not difficult. As the research progressed, however, problems with maintaining a credible research role did develop. These and other problems encountered in field work are discussed below. Before that, however, we turn to a general description of the qualitative data collection techniques.

C. Participant Observation Techniques

1. In the school

To gain a complete understanding of the school and avoid "elite bias", collecting information predominantly from organizational leaders, I made an attempt to sample the faculty members in each visit to the school. Sampling was necessarily imperfect because of the nature of school activities. For example, teachers were not interrupted while they were teaching (on occasion, they would stop teaching to talk with me voluntarily), and it was frequently the case that they left school immediately after meetings. Nevertheless, in almost all contacts with the school, at least five teachers, or approximately one third of the faculty, were used as informants.

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My rapport with teachers varied; this also affected sampling, and data collection in general. In several cases, after initial greetings, a teacher would proceed to give a full running account of activities since he or she had last seen me. With other teachers, the information flow was less; they were either not well informed of school-wide activities (several consciously isolated themselves during the conflicts) or had difficulty expressing their attitudes. In only one case did I have a persistent feeling that the teacher seemed cautious in making critical or evaluative comments about others; this may have been a result of suspicions held concerning my possible use of the information. The important point is that there was variability -- as might be expected -- in the types of relationships formed between me and the various faculty members. These relationships were also internally variable, so that a usually articulate person would on occasion remain quiet and an ordinarily reticent teacher would bubble over with important information. In general, then, the reliability of the data suffered, as in all participant observation studies, from the presence of uncontrollable factors such as the personalities of the faculty and the researcher and the exigencies of the immediate situation.

In addition to sampling the faculty, I tried to obtain as much volunteered information as possible (see Becker, 1958). Observation of meetings -- faculty, Board of Education, WEA, and PTA -- presented no problems; my role in them was as a complete observer. Informal interviewing during school hours, after meetings and, on occasion, at prearranged times, presented more of a problem since my role shifted toward a more participatory stance. In these situations I made a conscious attempt to ask as few questions as neutrally as possible. Fortunately, it was often the case that at informal gatherings teachers asked each other questions relevant to the research, and listening was the only task I had to perform. These occasions also increased my feeling that the data I was collecting were valid; they indicated that my focus was similar to that of the teachers, and that the research was attempting to answer "significant" questions, at least from the participants' point of view. Beyond these comments, however, there is no easy way to demonstrate the proportion of volunteered information, other than presenting portions of the field notes throughout the text, and letting the reader make a judgment.

Careful sampling and reliance on volunteered information are both anti-bias procedures. Another protection against bias involves avoiding injection of the researcher's opinions into the social system under study. From the beginning of the research I was careful not to express my personal opinions on any educational matter -- or, for that matter, on most topics. Since the organization was still being planned and there were numerous unknowns, I reasoned that suggestions, or approval or disapproval could have significantly more influence on the actions taken by faculty members than they might have had in a chronologically mature, stable organization. If expressed, my opinions could also have been viewed as implicit evaluations of actions taken, resulting in inhibited responses. Even as the conflict with the community intensified, I did not give my impressions of the conflict to any faculty member, or indicate that I supported any group. When asked my opinion -- which was surprisingly infrequently -- I would either make a non-committal comment, or, more usually, simply reiterate that my role did not include making judgments. I assume, however, that because of my clear interest in them, the bulk of the teachers viewed me as somehow sympathetic to their efforts, not those of the parents.

To some extent, this non-interventive stance intensified a psychological sense of marginality from the teachers and parents that I also experienced because of the fundamental fact that I was an outsider. Although this sense of marginality was uncomfortable, it enabled a more detached, "objective", rapport with all groups during the two-and-one-half years of field work, especially during the height of the school-community conflict.

2. In the community

Field work in the community was not as extensive as it was in the school, primarily because of time limitations. In the role of silent observer,I attended all LAHA, Board of Education and PTA meetings that in any way had relevance for understanding the school. In the initial stages of research, I conducted retrospective interviews with community members who had been active in the early school planning stages. These interviews were also useful for gathering information about the formation of the Lincoln Acres community, and about current community events. Throughout the year, I interviewed selected community members informally about a variety of specific issues. For example, Charles Frisch and his wife were interviewed shortly after they transferred their child from the Lincoln Acres school.

Because of the limited amount of time available for field work in the community, the small number of regular informants tended to be community leaders. This was efficient because they usually had a substantial amount of first-hand knowledge on a wide variety of issues. However, they were not representative of the community because of their elite positions and because in many cases, they developed first into critics and then into opponents of the school. To correct for these biases, I conducted several in-depth interviews with less-visible community members who were relatively satisfied with the educational program of the school. The project's use of questionnaires also provided a correction of possible bias toward the attitudes and reactions of community members who were more involved and vocal at meetings, since a broad spectrum of opinion was tapped. Issues related to the questionnaires are discussed below.

The role I established with parents was the same as that used with teachers: a non-participant, non-intervening, interested observer. The only potentially serious break in this role performance concerned the faculty communications workshop. The Social Architecture project made matching funds available to the school for support of the workshop, since there was no intention of using the money for a consultant. Selection of the Playboy Club was entirely a school decision; the project staff was considerably surprised by the choice of location but continued to support the workshop. When the editor of the Washingtonville Courier discovered the source of partial funding, she telephoned the project director for more information. In a front page article headlined: Lincoln Acres School Staff Meets at Playboy Club," the Board of Education reaction and Biddle's defense appear, followed by this account of the research project.

> Studying the Lincoln Acres School staff organization and documenting the planning process are Barry Gold and Dr. Matthew B. Miles, senior research associate, of the Center for Policy Research, Inc., New York City. With a National Institute of Education federal grant, the center is studying five new schools to document but not influence new school organization.
>
> The center is using Federal money to pay for half the Lincoln Acres communication workshop at the Playboy Club while the school board pays the rest of the cost.
>
> Dr. Matthew Miles says center researchers,who theorize failure of new schools in the sixties was due to poor planning,hope to develop a strategy to avoid failure in the future. He says the center chose Washingtonville and the Lincoln Acres Elementary School because they wanted to study a success story.
>
> "We are impressed with the planning we've seen so far. But we are not influencing planning but trying to be a fly on the wall," he adds, saying all center studies are confidential and strive for objectivity.

At the next Board of Education meeting, one parent, in a far-ranging condemnation of the proposed school accused the Center for Policy Research of promoting irresponsibility in the districts' educators by both providing the money for and suggesting the Playboy Club as a meeting place. The following week a letter to the editor (quoted on page 137) also complained about the use of Federal funds for supporting the workshop. Fortunately, there was no further public discussion of the matter.

An unintended intervention with some lasting effects developed as a result of the parent mail questionnaires. The first questionnaire was mailed at the same time that a Board of Education election was beginning. The questionnaire had been cleared with Biddle and Brown6) before it was

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6) Biddle found no questions objectionable, but Brown requested the removal of a set of questions designed to measure community satisfaction with the job performance of himself, the superintendent of schools and the resource teacher, among other key positions in the school and community, such as the chief of police. These questions were removed.

mailed to parents. Shortly afterward, Tom Hassfelt, a first-time candidate for the Board, raised the issue with several Board members of the use of demographic data on the survey. (The reader may recall that this issue was initially raised when the faculty conducted its survey at the beginning of the summer workshop, with the result that the demographic information was removed.) After consultation with the researchers, Biddle reported to the Board of Education that the demographic section was marked "optional" and that the questionnaires could not be altered since they had already been mailed to all families. The lasting result was that the two succeeding questionnaires had to be approved by the Board of Education. Each time objections were raised about the use of demographic data, but with the required indication that they were optional, both questionnaires were mailed as we had designed them. To a large extent the Board members used the questionnaires -- as they often did -- to harass Biddle, making him obtain their consent on otherwise routine matters.

An intentional but minor intervention was that selected results of the first parent questionnaire were fed back to the community, consistent with the terms of our agreement. At the suggestion of the superintendent, the method of providing feedback was to have a single report located in the Board of Education office. This enabled Biddle to explain the results to interested parents. To my knowledge, few parents actually consulted the survey results.

In general, then, the research was not highly visible to most members of the community. A brief explanation of the research by Brown at an early PTA meeting, the newspaper article and the mail questionnaires they received, were the only contact with the research for most parents. Relatively few Lincoln Acres residents were continuously used as active informants, though many were regularly observed at meetings. But during meetings, and after them in the form of interviews and eavesdropping, the amount of information gained was substantial, especially since the problems with the school were the dominant topic in the community for many months. As with the teachers, the parents who were interviewed cooperated fully and appear to have provided honest, complete responses.

3. Field work in a conflict situation

The first school-community conflict presented few difficulties for conducting field work; the school was not opened yet and the parents and teachers met face-to-face infrequently. However, the second conflict -- once the school was in operation -- produced two major problems. First, there was tension over whether to abandon the non-participatory, noninterventive research role and actively intervene in the school by providing support and information. Second, maintaining a "neutral" role performance -- one that appeared non-aligned with a specific group -- during the internal school conflict became problematic.

My impulse to participate actively in the affairs of the school and community was a result of prolonged observation of the conflict between them. By the middle of the second conflict, it appeared impossible for either side to gain an accurate, balanced view of the other which might lead to a quick, constructive resolution of the conflict. Although it may have been self-serving, at the time I felt -- and still do -- that because of my special position I knew more about events in the school and community than most others involved. For example, I often attended LAHA or Board of Education meetings at which there were no faculty members. A day or two later at a faculty meeting inaccurate rumors generated by events at community meetings would be circulated; these were sometimes the basis for faculty actions and usually provided reasons for increased anger with parents, Biddle or the Board of Education. Similarly, I was informed by Ellis that he was actively looking for another job several months before he announced his decision to leave Lincoln Acres school to the faculty. Shortly after Brown told me of his plans I attended teacher meetings at which plans for punishing him were made. My feeling at the time of these incidents was that I could possibly have played the role of conciliator between the community and school and later between the teachers and Brown. This feeling persisted for some time and became especially intense when Katie was fired and the NBC and BJW teams were re-organized. Throughout this period I had a nagging feeling that I was in some way not acting in a socially responsible way by remaining silent. But after several conversations with the project director and others, I was assured, and eventually convinced, that my behavior was not unethical. In the end, I retained the original role and did not offer either advice or other feedback to either members of the school or community.

In keeping with the non-interventive stance, several research design decisions were made at this time to decrease the possibility of having an effect on the school. For example, although it was not our original intention, we came to consider administering a questionnaire to students. As it developed, however, our intended date for administration coincided with parent demands for an outside evaluation of the school. To avoid the possibility of being viewed as evaluators, the student questionnaire was cancelled (we also were not certain that detailed-enough questions could be asked of elementary students to make data collection worth the effort). Similarly, the first questionnaire designed for parents was delayed for two months, at which time the conflict seemed to be well on its way to a resolution.

Despite these efforts, one unintended intervention did occur throughout the conflict. My presence as a person willing to listen to problems or complaints was taken advantage of by most teachers, Brown, Biddle and several parents. In some instances, this operated as a "safety valve", that is, as an outlet for frustrations, grievances and disappointments. The unintended consequence of this was that it was a non-constructive outlet; the information did not get channeled back into the organization for possible corrective actions; yet on several occasions there seemed to be a feeling of either relief or the perceived solution of a problem on the part of the informants. In some instances one of these issues was discussed at a faculty meeting, but not until several weeks after I was told about it. Throughout the research,I never discussed the content of a conversation with one informant with another.

When the conflict changed from one between the school and community to one within the school, many members of the faculty became suspicious of one another. For instance, one charge made several times was that Sam and Lee Whitmore were informing Ellis of what the teachers preferred to be secret information -- for example, next steps with the grievance, or discussions of other plans for punishing Brown. The major effect of the distrustful atmosphere on the research was that for periods of time -- usually a week or two -- some teachers offered considerably less information than they had previously. My reaction to this was to rely on other sources of information,and patiently wait for suspicions to subside. It should be noted that there was never any direct indication that teachers were reluctant to talk with me because they thought that I had acted as an informant for the administration or community. Communication throughout the organization became guarded after the initiation of the punishment procedures against Brown.

At the same time, because he was ostracized by the faculty, Brown began paying more attention to me. For example, in the minutes before a faculty meeting he would joke with me and often sit beside me instead of with the teachers as he had previously. To avoid the impression of being aligned with Brown (and for that matter, Pennington, Little and Biddle) I often had to use strategies for physically re-positioning myself in meetings. One successful ploy was the well-timed use of the bathroom or soda machine in the teachers lounge. This ended the conversation without being excessively abrupt and permitted me to re-join the meeting in another, presumably non-partisan, location. The basic objective of such maneuvers was to retain a role that presented me as interested in all groups within the school but as favoring and in the service of none, so that information could be collected from all participants. As in the other phases of field work, maintaining the strict confidence of informants was rigorously adhered to and proved to be beneficial. Overall, it is my impression that with the exception of a few weeks of reduced communication with several teachers, information was given to me in an uninhibited, minimally distorted, fashion. There is support for this assertion in the fact that I was permitted to attend all secret faculty meetings and information was volunteered that could have been damaging to both sides in the conflict if divulged to the other side.

This examination of the field work procedures used in this study is at best partial; undoubtedly, certain tactics I used were beyond my ability to note and analyze as I became immersed in the recording of the events reported in the text. Similarly, it is probable that I influenced the social systems I studied in ways that I cannot imagine or at the time was not aware of. Nevertheless, I believe that my attempt to interfere with the school and community as little as possible was reasonably successful and has resulted in an accurate, minimally contaminated reconstruction of the events involved.

D. Questionnaires

Three questionnaires were administered to both the faculty and the parents of all children attending the school. The faculty questionnaires were administered on December 8, 1975, June 14, 1976, and June 20, 1977. Time for answering the questionnaires was provided during regularly scheduled faculty meetings; several teachers took as long as two hours to answer the 40-page questionnaire. Considering that the faculty was not paid, and the questions lengthy, response rates were very high: 86% answered the first questionnaire, 71% the second and 83% the third.

Parent questionnaires were mailed at the same time that the faculty questionnaires were administered, except for the first questionnaire, which was delayed until February 20, 1976 because of the conflict.7) After two reminder letters for each administration, the response rate for parents was: 52% for the first questionnaire, 35% for the second and, 44% for the third. Considering that the first questionnaire was 27 pages, the second 15 and the third eight pages, the response rates are high. Code numbers (which could have reduced responses) appeared on both the parent and teacher questionnaires so that the successive waves of data could be meaningfully analyzed, and in the case of parents, so that reminder letters could be sent to those who hadn't returned the questionnaire. The code numbers were not used for identification of individuals during analysis; as promised in the letter that accompanied each questionnaire, respondent anonymity was maintained.

It should be noted that the community survey was not a random sample but instead was administered to the entire population of parents. This was done because only 226 families were in the population, making a meaningful basis for stratification of a sample difficult. The survey results for the parents, then, are illustrative and not representative of the opinions of the entire community. It is also likely that because of their intense involvement in the conflict, the returned questionnaires overrepresent parents who were dissatisfied with the school.

The major objective in the construction of the teacher questionnaires was to measure variables that would document and explain the degree of implementation of the innovation (see Pert I for the criteria of implementation success). The questionnaire was also intended to provide an in-depth view of the way the school was functioning at a particular point in time to supplement field work.

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7) Both Biddle and Brown suggested that the questionnaire be delayed until relations between the school and community showed signs of stabilizing. In view of our desire not to intervene, and the possibility that the questionnaire could have been viewed as an evaluation device, we agreed to delay the administration.

In the construction of both questionnaires,an attempt was made to have field work findings influence the questions asked (Sieber, 1973). For example, it occurred to a parent during an interview that many of his neighbors had been or currently were teachers; he speculated that this influenced their actions toward the school. As a result, a question asking if either or both parents had been or currently were teachers was included in the questionnaire. The finding was that 29% answered affirmatively,which suggested that expertise, or at least first-hand familiarity with education was high in the community.

There were several problems with the administration of questionnaires. As noted above, the first parent questionnaire was administered approximately two months after the first teachers' questionnaire in an effort to decrease the possibility of the research's being viewed by the community as an evaluation of the school. Thus the information from the teachers' questionnaires and the parents' questionnaires was not entirely comparable,since the school had been substantially altered in the interval. Nonetheless, the parent data were useful because many of the answers (for example, attitudes toward education) would not have changed because of events in the school. Other questions were worded to account for the rapid changes that had taken place in the school. and answers could be matched with the time of teacher response.

A more serious difficulty occurred at the time of the administration of the first teacher questionnaire: it coincided with the faculty meeting on December 8, 1975 at which the firing of Katie Neustadt was discussed (see p. 261). This was the most intense internal crisis of the school year and undoubtedly influenced the way the teachers answered the questions. Of course, while the situation may have biased the answers in a negative direction (espec. ratings of Brown's performance), the questionnaire did measure what it was intended to, the functioning of the school. Surprisingly, however, the answers were more positive than might have been expected. Several teachers even refused to answer some questions on the basis that they couldn't give "objective" responses under the strain of the removal of one of their fellow teachers. This indicates that they tried to be as honest as they could be without being swept away in the emotions of the moment.

The only other complication occurred with the administration of the second teacher questionnaire on June 14, 1976. The date for administration was set a month in advance with Ellis. As it turned out he was replaced as principal of the school a week before the scheduled administration date. This meant that a contract to continue research had to be negotiated with Alberta and her permission granted to proceed with the questionnaire. After brief discussions everything was agreed to and research continued. The problem, of course, was that when the teachers sat down to answer the questionnaires Ellis had already not been the principal of the school for a week. This caused confusion among the teachers over whether to answer as though Ellis was still the principal, or under the actual conditions of Alberta's principalship. I made the decision that the questionnaires should be answered as if it were a week earlier and Ellis was still the principal. The reasoning behind this judgment was that the memory of Ellis was still fresh. Our objective was to measure the performance of the school for the previous six months, and Alberta had not been principal long enough for the teachers to answer meaningfully. As in the case of the questionnaire administered at the time of Katie's firing, the teachers' answers seem to accurately reflect the conditions of the school as they appeared in the course of field work. Nevertheless, the reader should be aware of the circumstances in which the first two teacher questionnaires were answered.

One advantage of combining field work with surveys is that the researcher can place the survey data in a meaningful context to evaluate the quality of the data. If, as is often the case, the researcher had not been present in the weeks before the questionnaire administration to observe respondent behavior, and/or the questionnaires had been mail-administered, the data would almost certainly be taken entirely at face value.

E. Documents

A third source of data was documents that pertained to the planning and operation of the school.8) These were collected as the research progressed and proved to be invaluable aids for understanding events as they unfolded. Documents were also useful during data analysis, as discussed in the next section.

F. Data Analysis Procedures

The techniques used to analyze the data presented in the text were complex and were at times on the fringe of the mysterious. No attempt will be made to reconstruct every step exhaustively; only the major procedures and the logic supporting them will be described.

1. Bureaucratic beginnings

Since this study was part of a larger project, Social Architecture in Education, which aimed at comparing six new innovative schools, the original analysis schemes developed were standardized, and to an extent, bureaucratized the research process. Through standardization, it was reasoned, data collection could be controlled, then data would be categorized in similar ways and analyzed across all of the sites.

To begin this process a coding scheme -- a set of labels to be applied to field work notes -- was constructed. This was essentially an

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8) For a listing of the types of documents collected, see page 8 of the Introduction.

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a priori listing of factors that appeared to have influence on the planning of a new, innovative school. Most of these were of a social-psychological, small-group nature. As the field work progressed new labels were added and those on the original list that no longer made sense were eliminated.

For the actual coding procedure -- the attachment of labels to the field notes -- an elaborate system was developed. After the field notes were typed, the field worker coded the notes and filled in several forms with questions such as: Who were the central actors in this contact? What decisions, if any, were made? and others. The field worker then discussed each choice of category and the information on the forms with another project member, preferably one who was somewhat "distant" from the particular site but not totally unfamiliar with it. This procedure was designed to serve as a means for avoiding a biased view of the site; alternative explanations were always being sought in these meetings. In most instances, this method resulted in dozens of concepts being applied to a single field contact.9)

Once the coding was completed, each fragment of field notes that had been assigned a concept was then cut and pasted onto an index card and filed with the other field work excerpts that had the same label. Despite lags between the coding, the discussion of the coding with another project member and the final cataloging system, this method continued for nearly six months and underwent several minor revisions in both the substance of the concepts and the procedure.

As field work progressed, it became evident that more than a social-psychological small-group orientation would be needed to accurately and fruitfully code the field notes; increasingly we were discovering that planning was a political activity and that planners and schools existed in outside environments that neither we nor they could ignore. Thus, the list of concepts expanded as it became grounded in field work data to include a variety of political terms and concepts for thinking about activities across the boundaries of the school, such as "resource acquisition" and "constraint management".

Eventually, after various shifts in emphasis, the list of concepts expanded and lacked parsimony. In addition, the coding process itself became cumbersome, given the ongoing demands of field work, questionnaire construction, and project meetings. The result was that coding backlogs increased, and considerable energy was spent in meetings puzzling over ways to reduce them. Most importantly, it was also becoming considerably less clear what the purpose of this data analysis procedure was: it did not seem to aid in the generation of higher-level concepts that would

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9) The length of field notes varied, with the average being approximately 10 single-spaced pages.

lead to explanations: the categories were useful but there was no apparent way that they would lead to connections between variables.

After considerable effort, the lists of concepts were collapsed into 36 key themes which were dimensionalized, for example: Knowledge-seeking: Active . . . . Not Active. Instead of coding each segment of the field notes, an entire field contact was coded by as few of these central themes as possible. As with the original scheme these were then put on index cards and filed.

The basic function of these elaborate procedures was that a common language and thus a more or less unified way of thinking about new schools developed among the project staff. Beyond this, however, the coding schemes, despite the systematic approach they provided, did not significantly influence the analysis presented in this study.

2. Later analysis methods

A project-wide analysis procedure that proved to be indispensable was staff "site analysis" meetings held approximately every two weeks -- on occasion more frequently -- to discuss recent events at a site. The focus of these meetings was on attempting to construct explanations for the activities and make predictions from them. Whenever it was possible, alternative hypotheses and explanations were proposed. The predictions were seldom correct and we were continually being surprised. For example, I was astonished that the teachers returned from the first year's Christmas vacation and actually took the militant stance against Brown and the parents that they did. I suspected that their passions would be tempered by the distractions offered in the holiday season and that they would adapt to the situation through passive non-compliance or resignation but not engage in aggressive reprisal.

The products of these site analysis meetings were memoranda that were used to guide further data collection and the ongoing analysis.

Another regular analysis device was that in field notes (which were typed by the field worker immediately after a contact) a separate section was devoted to hunches, impressions or more concrete analysis. These contributed to the more formalized analysis meetings, memos, and to a comprehensive summary of the school that was made after the first six months of research. It should be noted that this summary provided an opportunity for a "trial run" at producing a case study.

Finally, shortly before writing of the final case study was to begin, a comprehensive site analysis memo was prepared. This paper integrated the previous analysis memos without substantially changing the interpretations that had preceded it. Included in it were: a chapter outline, the contextual features of the Lincoln Acres school, a brief chronology of salient events, a section on "planning and implementation as now viewed," and the key themes that emerged in the site and explanations of them in the form of propositions.

The central task then was the accurate reconstruction of the events that occurred during the planning and implementation. Without this, confidence in the analysis already performed and, in future analysis would have been reduced, since, at minimum, the correct time sequence is necessary before it is possible to make statements that purport to detect causal relationships among variables. Because of the longitudinal nature of the study and the frequency of observations, reconstructing the flow of events was not overly difficult. It was done by creating a time-line that located the major events from a careful reading of field notes, newspaper accounts and other documents. The product of recreating the chronology was a detailed outline for use in writing the final report.

Once the chronology was established, writing began. The field notes were read carefully again along with the documents and at each stage the outline served as a guide. Most importantly, the site analysis memos that had been produced for project staff meetings guided the selection of material appropriate for presentation in the text -- including negative instances -- as well as for the analysis.

A brief example of the actual data analysis procedure may be useful. One central conclusion reached was that the school-community conflict was primarily between professional and democratic norms. This finding is more of a post factum interpretation than most; oddly enough, it was not until late in the analysis -- after writing had begun -- that this way of viewing the conflict emerged. Before this it was clear that there was an intense, prolonged conflict, of course, but there were several alternative interpretations, none of which was entirely convincing.

One interpretation was that the conflict was simply a matter of the community's opposing the innovations: the community members were locals and the faculty cosmopolitans; they had different reference groups. Another interpretation was that the parents were older, upwardly mobile first-time homeowners and thus had a more conservative value system -- especially concerning education -- than the younger, less financially competitive faculty. There was little data to support either of these conclusions, and some countering information. For example, in terms of both educational and general societal values, the results of the questionnaires indicated that the parents and teachers had similar orientations. In the course of field work, only a few parents commented negatively on the teachers' value system -- they incorrectly wanted to be "friends" to the students or dressed too casually -- and the majority of parents, including the community leaders, were willing to give the innovation a try. In fact, several of the parents who were anti-innovative before were completely satisfied immediately after the school opened. These considerations led us to examine more closely the complaint that focused, in the first conflict, on the violation of democratic norms, and in the second conflict on the inability of the teachers to perform their roles and present convincing arguments for the continuance of the innovation to parents whose expertise in educational matters was substantial. Although the value orientation arguments were not entirely dismissed, the overarching explanation appeared to us to be found in the tension between democratic and professional norms.

This example also illustrates one of the ways in which the quantitative data aided the analysis. In this instance it permitted the examination of alternative hypotheses. Another use was that the questionnaire data permitted us to place more confidence in an interpretation based on a field work finding. In the illustration above, the possibility that the parents had considerable expertise in education was present from field work observation (for example, it was clear that Frisch was an expert, and a few other active parents mentioned past experience as educators), but the questionnaire results indicating that 29% of parents had first-hand familiarity with education as teachers or former teachers substantially strengthened our confidence in this as a possible explanation of the conflict, and provided further reason to explore its implications.

Overall, an attempt was made to ground the analysis in the data while achieving a high enough level of abstraction to produce hypotheses fruitful for further investigation. It was not always easy to avoid the Scylla of mechanically applying _a priori_ concepts to the body of data and the Charybdis of producing sweeping generalizations unconnected to and far outrunning it.

Although in several instances the interpretations were changed as "distance" or "perspective" from the flow of events increased (as in the example above), for the most part the original interpretations contained in the field notes and analysis memos remained unchanged. These procedures did not, however, eliminate the problem of _post factum_ explanations of the data (Merton, 1968, p. 147-149) but did reduce them, thereby increasing the plausibility of the interpretations.10) It is clear that further research would have to be conducted to provide evidence for stronger support of the hypotheses reported in the study.

G. Notes on Case Studies

In this final section some of the limitations and advantages of case studies are discussed. This is an important topic because in the last few years ethnographic studies have been rediscovered (see Wilson, 1977) by educational researchers in reaction to despair over the inability of narrowly defined, often a-theoretical quantitative psychological studies to contribute to understanding -- or improvement -- of education. In the process of discovery these writers have neglected to consider some of the limitations of participant observation and the case studies produced from it.

The primary disadvantages of case studies are, as mentioned above, the _post factum_ quality of explanations and that only one population is

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10) For an interesting approach to this problem see Gans (1962, p. 347-348).

studied at one time (see Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 6-7) thus severely limiting the ability to generalize findings. In the quest for a scientific understanding of social life, these are important obstacles.

There are, however, several ways in which case studies, if detailed enough in the description they provide, can be scientifically useful.

First, certain social processes such as the use of force in social life, a problem area that has been largely ignored by sociologists (Goode, 1973, p. 27), are not easily studied with standardized instruments. Similarly, the social processes that evolve over a period of time, as in the creation of a new organizational setting like a new school, are too complex to be understood by "cross-sectional" instruments, even if they are used repeatedly.

The advantage of participant observation is that it reports on behavior in sufficient detail that generalizations can be made and then tested in further research. Thus, a second function is the generation of new variables to explain phenomena and, optimally, enable the creation of inductive theory.

An associated advantage of participant observation and the case study as a product suggests their fruitfulness in relatively new and uncharted areas of inquiry. Few researchers would claim that the organizational aspects of schools have been as well studied as, say, the details of cognitive learning processes. And still fewer would hold a brief for the idea that much is known about the design and operation of new, innovative organizations. Thus we consider participant observation and the intensive analysis of a single case to be the methods of choice.

APPENDIX B

REACTIONS TO FEEDBACK OF THE CASE

As in our other sites, we decided to feed back a draft copy of the case study to selected participants from the school and community. Participants would have an opportunity to correct factual errors, point out possibly-identifying or damaging material, and comment on the general thrust of the study and its conclusions. From the research perspective, participants' commentary offered an opportunity to evaluate the accuracy of the observations, the soundness of the interpretations and the possibility of producing more data to aid understanding of the complex flow of events that had occurred during the planning and operation of the school.

We selected the following key people: Ellis Brown, Alberta Bard, Katie Neustadt, Regina Hanley, Charles Frisch, Sy Golden and Bob Biddle. In a letter at the end of December, 1977, we asked about their interest in providing factual corrections, and a two-page memo supplying alternative interpretations. All but Brown expressed interest, and copies of the case were sent to the next four people on the list in early January (Bard was asked to share her copy with Biddle, and Frisch his with Golden: this was done to save duplicating costs, but was in retrospect very desirable, since the teachers and Alberta could see the case before Biddle did.)

Although the feedback of the report was an intervention, our stance did not vary significantly from that taken in the course of the project --attempting to minimize influencing the social systems of the school and community.

We avoided choosing highly interactive feedback procedures (e.g., using the case study as a basis for structured discussions or training sessions with the faculty and parents). Still, however, the presentation of the case study to the faculty did develop into a fairly active intervention.

Participants' Reactions

On January 26, Alberta Bard called Miles, the project director, saying that they had had three days off because of snow, and that "nearly everyone in the school" had read the case. She also said that several teachers were "uptight" about the case, wanting to know what they could do about material they considered damaging; some wanted all direct quotes stricken from the text, and one was considering taking the case to the state teachers' association. A few were worried because the study was also accessible as a dissertation and could be examined by anyone interested.

Miles said that striking out all direct quotes was not possible, but that those jeopardizing an individual would be de-attributed. He also stressed that changes would not be made if the case study had only "hurt someone's feelings." He suggested that she contact Gold for further discussion; that she and others send in corrections and proposed elisions by February 10, so a revised copy could go to Biddle; and reviewed with her who else had received copies. Alberta said she would call Frisch and Golden asking them not to share their copies with others. Miles' notes said:

> In general, she seemed to be very reasonable, and working well as a mediator between us and the teachers. I did not get the feeling she was upset about anything in the case.

A few days later, Gold went to Lincoln Acres, meeting individually with seven people. He wrote afterward:

> For the most part the people I met with were cordial and extremely understanding; only one person was hostile and resistant to my suggestions to reconsider the situation.

Some faculty members were personally offended: they thought they had been portrayed in an unfavorable light. For example, Norbert White thought that some of the quotes attributed to him were "dumb" and that he couldn't have uttered them. Several teachers also thought that Katie's firing did not receive extensive enough treatment; they felt that the seriousness of the matter was slighted.

Generally speaking, the teachers tended to be preoccupied with what the case study said about individuals, and did not seem to be focusing on the school as an organization. The individual focus was not limited to self-protective reactions: for example, Rebecca thought Bert was "cast as a villain," and both Regina and Dori commented on the way Priscilla's actions had been depicted.

Alberta, on the other hand, did see more general implications in the report for the future of the school. Gold's notes read:

> The one implication she had drawn from the study was that she hadn't realized how committed the people were who tried the original innovations and how far she had retreated from them (that is, the original vision of the school) and become complacent. She said that she would try to increase the amount of creative teaching, and thanked me for having pointed out how comfortable the school had become with the old ways.

For the most part, passages to be omitted, corrections of factual information and differences of interpretation were minor; most problems were resolved in the face-to-face encounter between the researcher and the teachers. This outcome was in large part due to the fact that the most-concerned teachers had succeeded in defining the situation as one in which they could exert editorial control over the case.

Two instances, however, presented larger problems. The report contained references made by several participants to "emotional" problems on Priscilla's part. And Alan insisted that all references to him be deleted from the text.

Gold came to feel after talking (cordially) with Priscilla, Regina and others that his inclusion of the references had been a serious error of judgment. For one thing, some of the quotes, though reported accurately, were based on misunderstandings. Priscilla had been under a good deal of stress, but allusion to her problems as "emotional" unsettled her status in the school at the time of the feedback, caused distress to her and her friends, and could conceivably affect her employment prospects adversely.

Alan's reactions were a surprise. Basically, there seemed no reason to suspect that he would have been offended by the relatively minor (and, in the opinion of the researcher, positive) role attributed to him in the text.

But Alan insisted that all references to him be removed from the text. Interestingly, he did not find fault with the general role that he and his teammate played in the school, but with many of the particulars which, from his perspective, were often, if not totally wrong, at least not the full story. He felt that the report "reflected badly on his teaching ability," and attributed problems in the BB team's functioning to him, rather than to his partner. When Gold asked if he had read the entire report, Alan said he hadn't--only the parts about him. It was a "soap opera," he said; the only chapter of any worth was the last one, because it discussed the school as an organization (without, that is, reference to individuals). Alan continued to be upset during his discussion with Gold, who left promising him the option of specifying places in the case where allusions to him should be deleted.[1)]

On February 15, Alberta sent along photocopies of 57 marked-up pages of the report, with the changes and omissions requested by teachers. Since by this time Gold had taken another job, and Miles was out of the country from February through July, the revision process went very slowly.

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1) We could not, of course, make Alan into a "non-person," as if he had never existed: he was part of the social system of the school. But revisions in the case were made to be as fully responsive as we could to his concern.

No teachers, nor Alberta, ever sent interpretive memos supplying their alternative explanations of the events of the case. We infer that the meetings with Gold, plus the opportunity to provide corrections, enabled people to "set the record straight"; the conversations had also provided an opportunity for direct interaction and clarification that was reassuring. In any case, given the personalistic bias we have noted, there seemed to be little motivation to engage in general analysis.

Neither Frisch nor Golden supplied corrections or commentary. Considering the emotion-laden conflict between the school and community, and the ability of the community to use the newspapers, petitions, letters and other feedback mechanisms, this lack of reaction was somewhat of a surprise. Perhaps, becausethe community was victorious, there was nothing to complain about by the time the report was released. It may also be that Frisch and Geller were being responsive to the request from Alberta--whom they seemed to respect--that the case study not be shared with others.

Ellis Brown did not answer our letter asking if he would like to see and comment on the case. In one sense, this was congruent with earlier behavior: the reader may recall that Brown sometimes chose to ignore or selectively interpret messages from the school's constituents and the faculty. But in another sense, his non-reply was understandable. He had alluded indirectly at a number of points to the stress he had been under ("I'm 27 going on 81."), and we think it likely that the Lincoln Acres experience was an extremely uncomfortable period in his career. So he might well be reluctant to rummage around in the recent and disastrous past, even though a detached observer might have virtuously pointed out that mistakes and painful experiences can be instructive.

In mid-July, 1978, after final revisions were made in the case to include teachers' suggestions, it was sent to Robert Biddle for his corrections and commentary. He wrote back with a number of corrections, and commented:

> I have had difficulty responding to the study. My first reaction was anger; my second /that/ by and large, Barry did a good job....The study should make a real contribution.

As we have seen from earlier footnotes, Biddle was most angered by the "value judgments" that he had acted in a laissez faire manner, or tried to co-opt anyone, as well as by the implication that he was not interested in cognitive aspects of learning, and statements that he had not acted to support Ellis. He also stressed that his contact with the researcher had been minimal.

During a telephone interview, he said that insufficient attention had been given to certain constraining aspects of the early context, including: (1) increased construction costs after the first plans, resulting in rebidding and considerable construction and equipment delivery delay, which reduced Ellis' planning time; (2) the Board's refusal to hire the principal a year to 18 months ahead, which cut planning and community relation-

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ship-building time to an "impossible" six-month period; (3) the statewide budget crisis which required much energy during the summer and fall of 1975; (4) the resignation of the central office personnel director who had served as a troubleshooter, followed by the Board's hiring an external negotiator, who "caused" the subsequent strike.

In another phone interview, Biddle also re-acknowledged his misreading of the community as being mostly committed to open education, and his mistaken belief that he could "sit out" the "moaners and groaners." And he mused in his notes on the study:

> A school is what the principal is. Ellis was an is becoming /a good principal/ and I have no doubts that when he internalizes the experience he will be or should be a very fine administrator.
>
> /He/ is a bright guy. I hope he makes out well on Cape Cod and goes on to great things. He has the potential if he is able to conquer his feelings of superiority and arrogance. He wasn't the person for Lincoln Acres--he might now be--and had he known how to listen, he might have made it. We need people as bright as he. Alberta is still doing a great job.

Comments from the Author

Biddle's comments, though they are occasionally and naturally self-protective, do add useful contextual information to the study. However, neither his comments, nor the specific changes and corrections made by the teachers, suggest that the general lines of analysis followed in the case are incorrect, or need expansion in any significant way. This adds to my confidence that I understood, eseentially, the meaning of the events we were studying.

I do have further reflections in two areas: the role of students, and our feelings about the Lincoln Acres faculty.

Scattered throughout the study, there are references to the children who attended Lincoln Acres school, but their reactions to the events, their behavior and the innovations' impact on them are not reported systematically. The omission of detailed information on students was intentional; we were interested in the planning and implementation of the school, and only peripherally in the impact of the innovations on students. A complete study should document and analyze the participation of all of the members of the organization.2) We should note that

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2) Studies of schools tend to focus primarily on one subpopulation, neglecting others. For example, Coleman's Adolescent Society (1961) hardly mentions teachers. Gross et al (1971), and Smith and Keith (1971) largely ignore students, who did not seem to be considered as possible (cont'd)

the Lincoln Acres students were lively, extremely well behaved, and intellectually curious. Though they were affected by the tumult around them, they appeared to weather the eruptions of their elders rather well.

The Lincoln Acres study raises several questions about the role of students in new educational settings. In what ways do student characteristics and behavior influence planning and implementation processes? Do rapid change, and school-community and intra-school conflict, have substantial effects--desirable or not--on students? What planning and implementation roles might students--especially of elementary age--play? More generally, how can young students participate in school governance?3)

I was often asked by Lincoln Acres faculty what I thought of them. I naturally declined to evaluate or advise, but some general comments may be in order here.

It is clear there were many areas where the central administration, the school administration, and the teachers could have performed more thoughtfully, more professionally, or with more humane impulses. Despite the obvious shortcomings, however, my view is that the majority of the faculty were sincere in their efforts and attempted to provide the best possible education for their students. If nothing else, the depth of their disappointment and frustration at not having succeeded, which was evident during the first year and surfaced again in the response to the case study, attests to the authenticity and sincerity of their efforts.

Aside from their professional dedication to children, they were warm, friendly, and generous toward me as a researcher. It should be warmly acknowledged that without their trust, patience and introspection, the study could not have been written.

My hope is that the Lincoln Acres teachers--and other educational innovators who read this account of their painful experience--will have learned things that will stand them in good stead as they go about the task of improving the part of American education they can do something about.

(cont'd) sources of influence. One of the few studies on new-school planning and implementation that tries to include both adult and student data carefully is Center for New Schools (1975).

3) We should note that educational innovators, unlike researchers, do not have to obtain "informed consent" from students--or even parents--about the risks and benefits of a proposed innovation. In a sense, the Lincoln Acres story is in part one of parents' moving much closer to the arena of decisions about educational innovation than is classically the case. But even here, students were not involved in any systematic way.

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